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THE LIVING CHRIST AND THE FOUR GOSPELS

THE LIVING CHRIST AND THE FOUR GOSPELS

By R. W. DALE LL.D
Birmingham

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LECTURE IX

TATIAN

I

IN his *Address to the Greeks*, Tatian tells us that he was born in Assyria ; that in his youth and early manhood he was instructed in the laws, the literature, and the religious beliefs of the Greeks ; that he travelled in many lands, and became familiar with the customs and philosophies of many races of men ; that he carefully considered their religious rites, and was initiated into their mysteries. According to Eusebius, he was a sophist—a professional rhetorician—and lectured with distinction on various branches of Greek learning.

At last, to use his own phrase, he withdrew into himself, that, if possible, he might discover the truth. While he was earnestly engaged in this inquiry, he happened to meet with certain " barbaric writings," as he calls them, some of

which were more ancient than Homer, and than the earliest of the writers who were honoured by the Greeks, and more ancient than even their legendary heroes. The sacred books of the Jews attracted him by the simplicity of their style, by the naturalness and sincerity of their writers, by the knowledge of future events which was shown in their prophecies, by their admirable moral precepts, and by their teaching concerning the unity and supremacy of God.[1] In Christ he found the fulfilment of Jewish hope, and so he became a Christian.

About the middle of the second century he was in Rome. At this time he was intimately associated with Justin Martyr, and was a conspicuous defender of the Christian Faith. He tells us that Crescens, a philosopher, was the bitter enemy of both of them, and plotted their death. During the life of Justin his opinions were orthodox, but after the death of his friend his name was associated with some serious heresies. He came to hold severe views concerning the evil of the "flesh," and denounced marriage as a crime against the higher life of the soul. He was also charged with adopting some of the speculations of Valentinus the Gnostic. When he left Rome, he appears to

[1] *Address to the Greeks*, cap. 29, 31, 41.

have travelled eastward, and his last years were probably spent among his countrymen on the banks of the Euphrates.

Although he regarded Justin with affectionate admiration,[1] the two men were very unlike. Justin could never wholly forget the charm of his old philosophical studies, and speaks with sympathy of those who by adventurous paths of speculation were endeavouring to find their way to the secret of the universe, and to the life of God. Tatian, who was probably a more learned man than Justin, assails every form of human philosophy with fierce contempt. Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle, Heraclitus and Diogenes—he scorns and ridicules them all. He exults in the traditions—some of them quite untrustworthy—of their infirmities and vices, and he mocks at their claims to wisdom. A very few years ago it would have been necessary to say that of all his numerous writings only his *Address to the Greeks* remains ; but, to the astonishment and delight of scholars, the most important and valuable of his lost books has been recently recovered. The story of the recovery is so interesting that I will venture to tell it.

[1] He speaks in his *Address*, cap. 18, of "the most admirable Justin."

II

In several ancient authors there are references to what is described as Tatian's *Diatessaron*. Eusebius says that

"Tatian composed a sort of connexion and compilation, I know not how, of the Gospels, and called it *The Diatessaron*. This work is current in some quarters even to the present day." [1]

Epiphanius (about A.D. 315 to A.D. 403) informs us that

"The *Diatessaron Gospel* is said to have been composed by him [Tatian]. It is called by some the Gospel according to the Hebrews." [2]

In 453, Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus, near the Euphrates, writes :

"He [Tatian] composed the Gospel which is called *Diatessaron* cutting out the genealogies and such other passages as show the Lord to have been born of the seed of David according to the flesh. This work was in use, not only among persons belonging

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[1] *Ecclesiastical History*, iv. 29. The translation given in the text is Dr. Lightfoot's.

[2] That the *Diatessaron* was the Gospel according to the Hebrews was either a mistake of Epiphanius himself, or else of the persons whose opinions he is reporting. It is clear that Epiphanius had never seen the *Diatessaron*. For an explanation of the origin of the error, see Hemphill : *The Diatessaron of Tatian*, p. xv.

to his sect, but also among those who follow the apostolic doctrine, as they did not perceive the mischief of the composition, but used the book in all simplicity on account of its brevity. *And I myself found more than two hundred such copies held in respect in the Churches of our parts. All these I collected and put away, and I replaced them by the Gospels of the Four Evangelists.*" [1]

This testimony is important. Theodoret knew the book and had carefully examined it; his words clearly imply that it was a compilation of the Four Gospels with certain passages cancelled which were inconsistent with Tatian's heresies concerning the necessary evil of the "flesh."

There is also a reference to the *Diatessaron* in the *Doctrine of Addai*, a kind of romance written in Syriac, and professing to give an account of the introduction of Christianity into Edessa.[2] It contains the legend of Abgarus, the king of Edessa, who, when suffering from an incurable disease, is said to have heard of the miracles of our Lord, and to have sent a message to Him appealing to His pity, and

[1] Hemphill: *The Diatessaron of Tatian*, p. xvi.

[2] Lipsius thinks that it belongs to the end of the third century or the beginning of the fourth, but that "its groundwork must be much earlier."—*Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. i., p. 31.

imploring him to come to Edessa. The romance gives the following account of the worship of the Church which was founded in Edessa after our Lord's resurrection.

"They ministered in the church which Addæus had built, at the order and command of king Abgar, and they were furnished from what belonged to the king and to his nobles with some things for the house of God, and others for the supply of the poor. But a large multitude of people assembled day by day, and came to the prayers of the service, and to the reading of the Old Testament and the New of the *Diatessaron*." [1]

The story told in the *Doctrine of Addai* is wholly untrustworthy, but it shows that the *Diatessaron* must have been in common use in the Syrian Church when the book was written.

There is another testimony from a Syrian bishop, Bar-Salibi, who lived at the end of the twelfth century. He says that the *Diatessaron* of Tatian began with the opening verse of John's Gospel. He also says that Ephraem the Syrian

[1] Hemphill, p. xvii. This romance was first published in Dr. Cureton's *Ancient Syriac Documents* (1864). Cureton's MS. read *Ditornon*, to which word no meaning could be attached. A MS. since discovered at St. Petersburg contains the reading *Diatessaron*.

(about A.D. 308 to A.D. 373), theologian, poet, orator, saint, wrote a commentary on it.

"Tatian, the disciple of Justin, the philosopher and martyr, selected and patched together from the Four Gospels and constructed a Gospel which he called *Diatessaron*; that is, *Miscellanies*. On this work Mar Ephraem wrote an exposition, and its commencement was, '*In the beginning was the Word.*'" [1]

This was about all that was known in England of the *Diatessaron* when Dr. Lightfoot wrote the article on Tatian which appeared in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1877; and the evidence did not satisfy those who were unwilling to believe that as early as the middle of the second century, or a little later, our Four Gospels had not only been written, but had secured so uncontested a supremacy that even a heretic like Tatian recognized their authority, and used them as the basis of his narrative of our Lord's earthly history. Of the witnesses whose testimony has been quoted, it is at least doubtful whether Eusebius had seen the book. It is certain, I think, that Epiphanius had not seen it. The great writers of the West knew nothing of it. Victor of Capua, indeed, who flourished about the middle of the sixth century,

[1] Hemphill, p. xix.

had met with a *Harmony of the Gospels*, and supposed that it was the one which, according to Eusebius, had been composed by Tatian; but Victor calls it the *Diapente*, not the *Diatessaron*, and it began with the first verse of Luke instead of the first verse of John. It was only from the three Syrian witnesses—Theodoret, and the writer of the *Doctrine of Addai*, and Bar-Salibi—that any clear and satisfactory evidence could be derived. But Dr. Lightfoot maintained with great force that the traditional view of the Church was sound; that Tatian had compiled a story of our Lord's life from the Four Gospels, and had called it the *Diatessaron*.

If Ephraem's Commentary on the *Diatessaron* had been preserved, the controversy might have been closed, for the Commentary would certainly show the general structure and outlines of the book, and would probably contain many quotations from it. Unfortunately, early in the last century, a ship, laden with ancient manuscripts for Pope Clement XI., sank in the Nile, and many of Ephraem's writings were lost; among them, perhaps, his Lectures on the *Diatessaron*. To recover the lost book from the bed of the Nile was impossible; it perished long ago; but might not some other copy be still in existence?

III

Strangely enough, at the very time that Dr. Lightfoot was writing his article, and building up his laborious argument, he had Ephraem's Lectures on his own bookshelves, and they had been there for several years.[1] An Armenian translation of them had been published in 1836 by the Mechitarist monks, who are settled on the island of San Lazzaro, in the lagune between the Lido and Venice. These monks have had a remarkable history, and have done a remarkable work. Mechitar, the founder of the order, was an Armenian, and was born in 1676, at Siwar, the ancient Sebastia, a town near the source of the Halys, on the borders of Pontus and Cappadocia. In 1699 he was ordained priest, and came to be possessed with a passion for promoting both the intellectual and spiritual welfare of his countrymen. He went to Constantinople, and formed an association to carry out his design. Difficulties arose which led him to transfer his new society to Modon in the Morea, which at that time belonged to Venice. Here he and his companions worked for fourteen years, until,

[1] *Essays on the Work entitled, "Supernatural Religion,"* p. 287, note.

in 1715, the Morea was recovered by the Turks, and Mechitar's convent was broken up. He then received from the government of Venice the island of San Lazzaro, and from that time the Venetian convent has been the mother house of the order, and the centre of Armenian culture. Other congregations have been founded in Vienna, at Trieste, and at several places in Hungary.

The *Allgemeine Zeitung* (Dec. 17, 1850), bears a strong testimony to the great services which the Mechitarists have rendered to their fellow countrymen. It says :

"When one takes a nearer view of their labours at Vienna and Venice, one is amazed at the powerful influence which the literary activity of these learned monks exerts on the Armenian nation scattered throughout the East. The reviews, the books, the numerous translations of works on history, geography, philology, natural science, and voyages and travels, which are printed in the Mechitarist presses of Vienna and Venice, are carried far beyond Persia to the banks of the Indus and the Ganges, and have everywhere called forth among the Armenians the desire of knowledge and a taste for reading, and set on foot a literary movement, which was before entirely dormant in a people, till lately, essentially and exclusively commercial." [1]

[1] The account of the Mechitarists in the text is summarized from an article in Addis and Arnold's *Catholic Dictionary* : and the passage from the *Allgemeine Zeitung* is taken from that article.

Among the treasures of their library the monks possess "two 12th century MSS. of an Armenian translation, made apparently in the fifth century from the Syriac, of Ephraem's Commentary on a Gospel Harmony."[1] In 1836 they published an Armenian edition of Ephraem's works in four volumes octavo ; and the commentary is contained in the second volume.

"I had for some years," says Dr. Lightfoot, writing in 1889, "possessed a copy of this work, . . . and the thought had more than once crossed my mind that possibly it might throw light on Ephraem's mode of dealing with the Gospels, as I knew that it contained notes on St. Paul's Epistles, or some portion of them. I did not, however, then possess sufficient knowledge of Armenian to sift its contents, but I hoped to investigate the matter when I had mastered enough of the language."[2]

But even without a knowledge of Armenian, Dr. Lightfoot might have known the contents of Ephraem's Lectures before he published his article in May, 1877. For in 1876 a Latin translation had been published in Venice. As early as 1841, one of the monks, Father Aucha, had translated the Lectures into Latin, but the translation had remained in MS. in the Library

[1] Hemphill, p. xxi.
[2] *Essays*, etc., p. 287.

of San Lazzaro. At last it somehow came to the knowledge of Dr. George Moesinger, professor of biblical studies at Salzburg, and it was placed in his hands, with one of the MSS. from which the Armenian text had been printed. He revised the translation, and published it, as I have said, in 1876. Dr. Wace, who wrote a series of admirable articles on the *Diatessaron*, in the *Expositor* for 1881 and 1882, justly remarks that "considering the immense importance of Ephraem's work, it is a most curious point that it should have been before the world for nearly five years in a Latin translation, and should have remained practically unnoticed by any of the laborious scholars of Germany."[1] He adds: "Such an incident might well lead us to think that our materials for criticism are beginning to overpower us, and that some of our best treasures may be hidden from us like needles in a hay-stack." It is also curious that the importance of this discovery was at last brought home to the

[1] The *Expositor*, vol. ii., second series, p. 3. Dr. Wace quotes from a notice by Dr. Adolf Harnack, which had recently appeared in Brieger's *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, the following sentence: "Without doubt this publication contains the most important acquisition which our history of pre-catholic Christianity has received of late years."

scholars of Germany and England by an American theologian, Dr. Ezra Abbot, who called attention to it in his book on the *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, published in 1880.

The Lectures—or, as Dr. Wace prefers to call them, the *Scholia* of Ephraem—demonstrated that the *Diatessaron* of Tatian, published soon after the middle of the second century, was a continuous narrative of our Lord's life, consisting of "a close welding together of the Four canonical Gospels." How much of the contents of the Gospels Tatian omitted could not be confidently inferred from Ephraem's Lectures, for the Lectures are not a continuous commentary; but it was certain that Tatian used all the Four, and no other.[1]

IV

But the romantic story of the *Diatessaron* is not yet finished. The discovery of Ephraem's Lectures has been followed by the discovery of the *Diatessaron* itself.

A hundred and fifty years ago Stephen Evodius Assemani, a Syrian Maronite, and a member of a family of famous Orientalists, assisted his uncle Joseph Aloysius in his work

[1] *Expositor*, vol. ii., second series, pp. 10, 11.

in the Vatican Library; and he published, among other learned books, an account of the Oriental manuscripts contained in the Library. In this there is a brief notice of an Arabic MS. professing to be a translation of the *Diatessaron* of Tatian. Brief accounts of it were also given by Akerblad and the younger Rosenmüller. Akerblad, a Swedish scholar, who was famous for his Runic, Coptic, Phœnician, and ancient Egyptian learning, died about seventy years ago. The younger Rosenmüller, Professor of Oriental Literature at Leipsic, died some years later. But the accounts which these three eminent scholars had given of the MS. were meagre and unsatisfactory.

The discussions which were occasioned by the publication of Ephraem's Lectures recalled attention to these notices of the MS., and Ciasca, one of the scribes of the Vatican, promised in 1883 to give a fuller and more accurate description of it, and, if he had the leisure, to publish it in full. Circumstances delayed the fulfilment of both promises. But in the year 1886 an eminent dignitary among the Catholic Copts was visiting Rome, and Ciasca showed him the Tatian MS. He said that a similar one was in the possession of a member of his communion in Egypt. In the course of the

summer this second MS., which is described as beautifully written and illuminated in gold and colours, was sent to Rome ; and in 1888 it was published.[1]

It contains notes at the beginning and the end in which it is described as an Arabic translation of Tatian's *Diatessaron* made from the Syriac ; it gives the name of the translator and also the name of the writer of the Syriac MS. from which the translation was made. The translator lived in the early part of the eleventh century ; the writer of the Syriac MS. at the end of the ninth century. The Egyptian MS. supplies passages which are wanting in the imperfect MS. in the Vatican, and it is free from the interpolations which are recognizable in that MS.

The date of this translation shows that six centuries after Theodoret had collected two hundred copies of the *Diatessaron* from the Churches of his diocese, and replaced them with copies of the Four Gospels, there were Assyrian Christians who still clung to the book from which their fathers in the second century had learnt the story of Christ. But their country was under the Saracen yoke ; they had for-

[1] *Tatiani Evangeliorum Harmoniæ Arabice.* Romæ S.C. De Prop. Fid., 1888.

gotten the mother tongue of their race ; they were speaking the language of their conquerors ; and so the *Diatessaron* was translated into Arabic.

In its contents and in the order in which the facts of our Lord's life are narrated the Arabic *Diatessaron* is practically identical with the Syriac *Diatessaron* which was used by Ephraem. "Except in four instances, the order in which passages of the Gospels are cited by Ephraem is the order in which they occur in the Arabic Harmony." [1] It begins with the first five verses of the Gospel of John ; then follows the account of the birth of John the Baptist contained in the first chapter of Luke ; then the appearance of the angel to Joseph as told by Matthew ; then the story of our Lord's birth, the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, the prophecy of Simeon and of Anna as given by Luke ; then the visit of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, the slaughter of the children of Bethlehem, and the return of Joseph and Mary to Nazareth, as told by Matthew. From this point Ephraem passes to the great words in the first chapter of John : "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt in us. Through Moses is the law, but its truth through Jesus

[1] Hemphill, pp. xxviii., xxix.

our Lord. Grace and truth came through Jesus. The Jews sent to John and say to him, Who art thou ? He confessed, saying, I am not the Christ. They say to him, Art thou Elias ? He says, No." [1] But the *Diatessaron*, after the slaughter of the children and after the return to Nazareth, gives Luke's account of our Lord's visit to Jerusalem when He was twelve years of age ; this is followed by a brief statement of the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist ; and then follows John i. 7–28, which contains the passage just quoted from Ephraem. In Ephraem, singularly enough, the comments on our Lord's visit to Jerusalem in His boyhood occur after the comments on this testimony of the Baptist. This is one of the four cases in which Ephraem's order differs from the order of the Arabic *Diatessaron*. Until the story reaches the selection of the Twelve Apostles Tatian shows considerable freedom in his arrangement of the incidents ; but after this, and beginning with the Sermon on the

[1] I have given this quotation as it appears in Hemphill. It must be remembered that Ephraem wrote in *Syriac* ; that we have his Lectures in an *Armenian* translation ; that the Armenian translation has been translated into *Latin*, and that it is from this Latin translation of an Armenian translation that the passage has been translated into *English*.

Mount, he practically follows Matthew's order, until he comes to the Last Supper. Passages from Mark, Luke, and John are introduced at successive stages of the narrative. On what principle he determined their place it is difficult to discover. Why, for instance, should he have given the account of the visit of Nicodemus to our Lord (John iii. 1–21) after the story of the barren fig tree, and far on towards the close of our Lord's ministry? In this singular order Ephraem agrees with the Arabic text.

But while it is apparent that the contents and arrangement of the Arabic *Diatessaron* are practically identical with the contents and arrangement of the Syriac *Diatessaron* used by Ephraem, the *readings* of the translation show that the text had been revised. Ephraem's quotations represent a more ancient text than that represented by the Arabic translation.

V

And now, having told the story of the discovery of these two ancient books—the *Diatessaron* and the *Lectures* upon it—I have to show their value in relation to the question of the early origin and the historical trustworthiness of our Four Gospels.

Tatian was a man of intellectual vigour, and a scholar. There was fierceness in him, and obstinacy, and intolerance ; but his *Address to the Greeks* gives one the impression that he had courage and incorruptible honesty. He was a friend of Justin. He had travelled far, and had seen the Christians of many lands. And, what for my immediate purpose is as important as any of the facts which I have just recited, he was a heretic.

The date at which he left Rome is uncertain. It may have been as early as A.D. 150, or even earlier. It can hardly have been as late as A.D. 170. There is something attractive in the suggestion that, although he believed that on some grave subjects the faith and the practice of the orthodox Churches were at fault, he cared more for the rescue of his countrymen from heathenism than for the correction of the theological and ethical errors of those who had found eternal redemption in Christ. Whatever may have been his motives, he returned to the land of his birth, and preached the Christian Gospel to men who had not yet received it. He found it necessary to give to his converts the story of Christ in their own tongue ; and he took the story as it is given in our Four Gospels. With his characteristic audacity, he

cut out the genealogies, which he regarded as inconsistent with a true conception of the greatness and glory of Christ; and he did not shrink from tampering with the text of those passages which he retained. But the Gospels which he used, and the greater part of which he transferred to his own narrative, were the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and he used no others. Why did he use all the Four? Why did he use these alone? He had broken with the orthodox Churches, and was beyond their control. It was from himself that the Churches for whose use his narrative was prepared had received the Christian Faith. He was free—absolutely free—to give them any Gospel that he chose. I ask again, Why did he give them a Gospel constructed from the Four Gospels which are still in our hands?

There is an obvious answer to this question, and I think that the obvious answer is the only reasonable one. When he left Rome, these Four Gospels had a unique place in the Christian Churches of all lands. He knew that they contained the real and authentic story of our Lord's life. He might think that the genealogies had no right to a place in the first Gospel and the third. He thought it expedient to

modify some expressions which might lead his converts into theological error. But if he had to give his converts a narrative of our Lord's life, it was a matter of course that he should give them the story that had been told by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This was the trustworthy story ; he could give no other. And although he had tampered with the text, his *Diatessaron* had so little in it to create orthodox suspicion, and contained the narrative in so convenient a form, that Ephraem, the glory of the Syrian Church, expounded it.

Only thirteen years ago the evidence which could be alleged in support of the traditional theory that Tatian's *Diatessaron* was composed of our Four Gospels, though in my judgment sufficient, was scanty.[1] To Christian apologists, Tatian's *Address to the Greeks* contained clear proof that he knew the Gospel of John. The following passages seemed to place this beyond doubt : " God is a Spirit " (cap. 4). " And this then is the saying : The darkness comprehendeth not the light " (cap. 13). " Follow ye the only God. All things have been made by Him, and apart from Him hath been made no one thing " (cap. 19). But the proof was declared to be inadequate. The

[1] See pp. 202-206, *ante*.

recovery of Ephraem's Lectures, and of the Arabic translation of the *Diatessaron* has wholly changed the conditions of the controversy. That Tatian, the friend of Justin Martyr, knew our Four Gospels, and that in his *Diatessaron* he worked them into a continuous narrative, is now finally demonstrated.

VI

There is one more chapter to complete the story of this curious work, and you may be interested in hearing it.

I have already told you that Victor of Capua, the author of several commentaries on the books of the Old and the New Testament, and of a work, now lost, on the true method of determining Easter, met with a Latin MS. containing a Harmony of the Four Gospels. That was about A.D. 540. The MS. had no title ; but finding in Eusebius that Tatian had constructed a *Diatessaron*, he attributed it to Tatian. After the MS. had been copied under his direction, he corrected it, and then published it with the other books of the New Testament.[1]

[1] This is known as the *Codex Fuldensis* ; it contains, in addition to the books in our present Canon, the apocryphal *Epistle to the Laodiceans*. The Codex is valuable as preserving an early text of the Latin Vulgate of Jerome.

Till recently it was the general opinion of scholars that Victor was in error in supposing that Tatian was its original author. One piece of evidence seemed to be decisive: Tatian's *Diatessaron* was said to have begun with the first verses of the Gospel of John; in Victor's *Harmony* these verses are preceded by four verses from the Gospel of Luke. But the publication of Ephraem's Lectures on the *Diatessaron*, and of the *Diatessaron* itself, has shown that Victor was right.

The order in which the contents of the Four Gospels are arranged by Tatian is followed with inconsiderable variations in the Latin *Harmony* of Victor; and this order is so remarkable —I might say so wayward and eccentric—that the coincidence could not have been accidental. Victor corrected the Latin text of the *Harmony*, and modified it in other ways: the genealogies, for example, and some other passages, were probably inserted by him; but the *Harmony*, even as it stands, after Victor's revision, is substantially Tatian's.[1]

The *Harmony*, published by Victor—Tatian's

[1] The substantial identity of Victor's *Harmony* with Tatian's *Diatessaron* was first shown by Dr. Wace in the *Expositor*, vol. ii., second series, pp. 128–137 (1881).

Harmony—has had a great place in the history of the Christian Faith in Europe. There is a copy of it at Fulda, in Hesse Cassel, which, according to tradition, was in the hands of Boniface, the apostle of Germany, when he suffered martyrdom. It is supposed that when the body of the martyred saint was brought to Fulda the copy of the Gospels which he loved was brought with it. If the tradition is true—and there is said to be internal evidence that the book belonged to Boniface—the great missionary who in the eighth century evangelized the heathen races on the banks of the Rhine used a narrative of our Lord's life which had originally been prepared by the heretic Tatian for converts from heathenism on the banks of the Euphrates.

In the ninth century it was translated into the dialect of the Eastern Franks; and it appears to have been the basis of a poetical life of our Lord which was written for the Southern Franks, and which was intended to be sung to the harp. In the same century it furnished the substance of the *Hêliand*, which is described by its editor as the greatest monument of the old Saxon language in existence. For thirty years Charlemagne had endeavoured to compel the Saxons to accept the Christian Gospel. They abhorred his faith, but could

not resist his arms. They submitted to baptism as an acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Franks, rather than as a confession of the authority and grace of Christ; but they remained heathen still, and they preserved the superstitions of their ancestors by singing in the depths of their forests their old songs in honour of their old gods. When Louis the Pious succeeded his father, he determined on a kindlier and more effective policy. Had not the story of Christ a greater charm than the legends of Woden and of Thor? If the Christian story could be told in song by a poet of genius, it might perhaps win the hearts of the wild and resolute men who, while they bore the Christian name, regarded Christ with indifference or hatred as the God of their conquerors. At the request of the king the *Hêliand* was written—a noble poem telling the story of our Lord as it is told in the *Harmony* of Victor. According to its editor, it "breathes the spirit of the old Saxon nation and customs; and the diction sometimes rises to a very high pitch of poetic power and beauty. There is no doubt," he adds, "that the benign and beautiful doctrines of Christianity, by soothing the ears of ignorant heathen, would in this way find a ready access to their hearts."

It is a wonderful story. The *Diatessaron* was prepared by a heretic in the second century for the instruction of converts from heathenism in Assyria; in the eighth century and the ninth, converts from heathenism in the heart of Germany learnt from it the story of Christ. Scholars lamented that it had been lost among other treasures of the East; and when within the last few years it was discovered, they learnt that it had been known in the West for 1,300 years. There was ruggedness, fierceness, intolerance in the character of Tatian; but we may venture to hope that there was also a genuine and even passionate love for his Lord. In the history, could he have foreseen it, of that story of our Lord's life which he prepared for his countrymen, he would have found abundant consolation for all the distrust and hatred with which he was regarded on account of his heresies. The service which he rendered to men for Christ's sake Christ has gloriously honoured.

NOTE

To those of my readers who wish for a fuller account of the *Diatessaron* and its recovery, I strongly recommend Dr. Hemphill's *Diatessaron of Tatian* (London : Hodder & Stoughton), to which I am largely indebted for the material of this Lecture.

LECTURE X

JUSTIN MARTYR

I

JUSTIN MARTYR was born at Neapolis, the modern Nablous, which lies in the beautiful valley between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, near to Jacob's Well and "the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph."

His parents were heathen, and in his *Dialogue with Trypho* he tells, with considerable grace, humour, and pathos, the story of his early studies. To Justin, philosophy had always been, and it always remained, the noblest of human pursuits; for he believed that its aim was to restore man to God. But he came to the conclusion that the disciples of the illustrious men who first gave themselves to the great search after the supreme truth had

unhappily forgotten the real end of the adventurous inquiry ; and so it had come to pass that Platonists, Stoics, Peripatetics, and the rest, were more loyal to the authority of their teachers than to the truth itself. Justin's first master was a Stoic ; but he says, " after spending a considerable time with him, and finding that I learnt nothing more about God—for he himself knew nothing and said that such knowledge was unnecessary—I left him and went to another, who was called a Peripatetic, and who in his own opinion was a very keen and clever person." In the course of a few days the Peripatetic asked Justin to name the fees he proposed to pay, that their intercourse might be profitable to both of them. Thereupon Justin left him, thinking that a man who was anxious about the money he was to get for his teaching was no true philosopher. Still his soul was possessed with an uncontrollable desire to master the ultimate secret of the universe, and he attached himself to a Pythagorean who had a great reputation, and who had an immense opinion of his own wisdom. His new master asked him whether he had studied music, astronomy, and geometry ; " for surely," he said, " you do not hope to gaze on the truths which perfect the blessed life unless

you have first learnt those things which draw the soul from the things of sense, discipline it for the world of the spirit, and so enable it to behold that which is really the beautiful and the good." Justin lost heart. He knew nothing of music, astronomy, and geometry; he thought that these branches of learning, if he studied them to any purpose, would occupy him for many years, and that his passion for the knowledge of God would remain long unsatisfied. He could not endure the delay, and yet he was sorry to go to another master, for he thought that the Pythagorean had some real knowledge of the Divine mystery, which he longed to discover. But the Platonists had a great name, and a teacher of Platonism settled in Neapolis;[1] Justin therefore resolved to try Platonism. He devoted a great part of every day to his new master, and soon began to glow with enthusiasm for the Platonic doctrine. Now, at last, his thought was moving in regions lying beyond and above the vicissitudes and illusions of material things. The contemplation of those Eternal Ideas in which Plato

[1] It seems natural to suppose that Justin's phrase "our city" refers to the city of his birth rather than to Ephesus, in which, according to Eusebius, the scene of the conversation with Trypho is laid.

found the ultimate truth and reality of all things gave his mind wings, and he trusted that soon he would have an immediate vision and knowledge of God ; " for this is the end of the Platonic philosophy."

While he was possessed with these great hopes, it was his custom to go to a lonely spot not far from the sea for purposes of meditation. On one memorable day his solitude was disturbed. He was followed by an aged, venerable man, with gentle manners, who explained to Justin that he had been anxious about some of the members of his household who were away from home, and that he had come to that lonely place to see whether there was any chance of their returning—an explanation in which, under a thin and transparent veil, he indicates that Justin was a brother of his whom he hoped to bring back to the home of the Father of all. Justin, of course, does not profess to recognize his meaning, but explains in return why it is that he seeks solitude. Then the two begin to discuss some of the higher questions of philosophy—the difference between the knowledge which is given in the ordinary sciences and the knowledge of God ; whether it is possible to know God ; the true nature of the soul, and its immortality. The

stranger then tells Justin that long before the times of those who were reverenced as philosophers there lived certain prophets—men righteous, blessed, and dear to God, who spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Their writings were still in existence, and contained great discoveries concerning the origin and the end of all things, and concerning other matters which ought to be known to the philosopher. Then he went on to speak of Christ, the Son of God. "But," said the stranger, "these things are not to be seen and understood by all men, but only by those to whom it is given to understand them by God and by His Christ; pray, therefore, that above all things the gates of light may be opened to thee." When he had said these and many other things, he went away, and Justin never saw him again.

From that time a fire was kindled in Justin's soul—a fire that was never extinguished. He came to have a great love for the Jewish prophets and for the friends of Christ. He found in them what he had not found in the writings of the philosophers. He left the school of Plato for the school of Christ.

This is the story which Justin tells of his own conversion in the *Dialogue with Trypho*. Elsewhere he says that while he was delighting

in the doctrines of Plato the courage with which the Christians met death and all other terrible things convinced him that they could not be guilty of the secret crimes with which they were charged by their enemies.[1]

It is apparent that to Justin the Christian Gospel was, first of all, a revelation of things invisible and Divine. It was more than this—it brought to a sinful race the assurance of the infinite mercy of God, and it proclaimed the gift of eternal life ; but it was in his search for wisdom that he found Christ. For him the Gospel was also a philosophy ; it satisfied his unquenchable thirst for the knowledge of God.

He remained a philosopher after he became a Christian, and still wore the philosopher's cloak. It was the business of his life to make known the truth which God had made known to him. If through his fault other men were ignorant of the Christian revelation, the guilt of the sin from which the knowledge of Christ would have saved them would be his.[2] And so he was eager to explain his new Faith to every man, and was ready to discuss it with all sorts of people. There was nothing in him

[1] *Second Apology*, cap. 12.
[2] *First Apology*, cap. 3.

of the savage fierceness with which Tatian assaulted heathenism, but there was a quiet courage which no peril could subdue.

We know little of his life after his conversion, except that it was spent in illustrating and defending the Gospel of Christ. He taught in Rome, and perhaps in Ephesus. The date of his martyrdom is uncertain. It may have been as early as A.D. 148 : it may have been as late as A.D. 163.[1]

Of his works, some of the most important are lost. The most valuable of these is that which he had writtten *Against all the Heresies*. He refers to it in his *First Apology* (cap. 26). Some of the books which have been attributed to him can hardly be his. There remain his *First Apology*, which was written, as he says, about 150 years after the birth of our Lord, and was addressed to the Emperor Marcus Antoninus; his *Second Apology;* and his *Dialogue with Trypho* the Jew. That these

[1] "After a complete examination of the evidence, Mr. Hort concludes that 'we may, without fear of considerable error, set down Justin's *First Apology* to 145 or, better still, to 146, and his death to 148. The *Second Apology*, if really separate from the *First*, will then fall in 146 or 147, and the *Dialogue with Trypho* about the same time.'"—Westcott : *Canon of New Testament*, p. 99.

three were written by Justin is universally acknowledged.

II

In his *First Apology* he describes the weekly assemblies of the Christians—

"On the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the *Memoirs of the Apostles*, or the writings of the prophets, are read as long as time permits. Then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president, in like manner, offers prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the people assent, saying, Amen. And there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given; and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do and willing give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us; and, in a word, takes care of all who are in need." [1]

This was how Christians met for worship in

[1] *First Apology*, cap. 67 ("Ante-Nicene Library," translation).

the year A.D. 150 or earlier. There is a beautiful and pathetic simplicity in the picture. They were brothers and sisters in Christ ; they sat at His table ; they remembered orphans and widows, the sick, the poor, and strangers who were their guests, and relieved them. They were in peril of suffering loss of property, imprisonment, and death as the penalty of their Christian faith. While they were sitting at the Lord's Table they were reminded of their peril; for one of the objects for which their contributions were collected was to give relief to those who were " in bonds " for Christ's sake.

In several other places in his *First Apology* Justin speaks of these *Memoirs of the Apostles*, which he says were read in the Christian assemblies. He says—

" The angel of God who was sent to the same virgin at that time brought her good news, saying, ' Behold, thou shalt conceive of the Holy Ghost, and shalt bear a Son, and He shall be called the Son of the Highest, and thou shalt call His name Jesus ; for He shall save His people from their sins,' as *they who have recorded* all that concerns our Saviour Jesus Christ have taught."—*First Apology*, cap. 33.

" The *apostles* in the *Memoirs* composed by them, which are called *Gospels*, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them—that Jesus took bread, and, when He had given thanks, said, ' This

do ye in remembrance of Me; this is My body'; and that after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, 'This is My blood,' and gave it to them alone."—*Ibid.* cap. 66.

In the *Dialogue with Trypho* there are the following references to the *Memoirs*—

"He called one of His disciples—previously known by the name of Simon—Peter; since he recognized Him to be Christ, the Son of God, by the revelation of the Father; and since we find it recorded in the *Memoirs of the Apostles* that He is the Son of God; and since we call Him the Son, we have understood that He proceeded before all creatures from the Father by His power and will, and that He became man by the Virgin."—*Dialogue with Trypho*, cap. 100.

"When He came out of the water, the Holy Ghost lighted on Him like a dove [as] the *apostles* of this very Christ of ours *wrote*."—*Ibid.* cap. 88.

"They that saw Him crucified . . . spake in mockery the words which are recorded in the *Memoirs of His Apostles*: 'He said that He was the Son of God: let Him come down; let God save Him."—*Ibid.* cap. 101.

"He kept silence and chose to return no answer to any one in the presence of Pilate, as has been declared in the *Memoirs of the Apostles*."—*Ibid.* cap. 102.

"I have already proved that He was the only begotten of the Father of all things, being begotten in a peculiar manner, Word and Power by Him, and having afterwards become man through the virgin, as we have learned from the *Memoirs*."—*Ibid.* cap. 105.

"When Christ was giving up the spirit on the cross,

He said, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,' as I learned also from the *Memoirs*."—*Ibid.* cap. 105.

"In the *Memoirs*, which I say were drawn up by the *apostles* and *those who followed them* [it is recorded] that His sweat fell down like drops of blood while He was praying, and saying, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass.'"—*Ibid.* cap. 103.

"In the *Gospel* it is written that He said, 'All things are delivered unto Me by My Father'; and 'No man knoweth the Father but the Son, nor the Son but the Father, and they to whom the Son will reveal Him.'"—*Ibid.* cap. 100.

Trypho is represented as saying—

"I am aware that your precepts in the so-called *Gospel* are so wonderful and so great that I suspect no one can keep them; for I have carefully *read* them."—*Ibid.* cap. 10.

I might quote other passages, but these are sufficient for my purpose.

The "*Memoirs*" the "*Memoirs of His Apostles*," the "*Memoirs drawn up by the Apostles and those who followed them*," the "*Memoirs composed by them* [the apostles], *which are called Gospels*":—how could Justin have described more accurately the four narratives of our Lord's life which are contained in the New Testament? Matthew and John were apostles, Mark and Luke were followers of the apostles; and it is deserving of notice that

in the passage in which Justin describes the Memoirs as having been drawn up, not merely by the apostles, but by their followers, he is about to mention a fact which is recorded only in the Gospel of Luke.[1] In the quotations which I have read, you have already recognized passages, or references to passages, with which you are familiar in our Gospels.

III

The worth of Justin's testimony is challenged because he does not say explicitly that the *Memoirs* which were read in the Christian assemblies in his time were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Why did he not give the names of the writers? How can we tell that these *Memoirs*, which Justin says were called *Gospels*, were the same Gospels that are in our hands to-day?

The answer to this question may be given in a single sentence. When Christian writers in the second and third centuries were addressing those who were not Christians, they did not appeal by name to the sacred books of the

[1] "His sweat fell down like drops [of blood] while He was praying."—*Dialogue with Trypho*, cap. 103. See Luke xxii. 44.

Church. Why should they? Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were no authorities to those who had not received the Christian Faith. The practice of Justin was the practice of the other apologists. Tatian, as we have seen, composed a *Harmony* of the Gospels. In his *Address to the Greeks*, though there are allusions to passages in the First Gospel and the Fourth, he never names either Matthew or John. Tertullian, when he is writing for Christians, uses the Gospels as freely as they are used by any modern preacher, and names their writers, but in his *Apology* their names are not once mentioned. But I repeat that our Gospels could not be described more accurately than they are described by Justin. They are *Memoirs*, *Recollections*, not regular and complete biographies; and they were drawn up by "apostles and those who followed them."

I have already given a considerable number of passages in which Justin either quotes the *Memoirs* or refers to the facts which they record. In the three works of Justin, which are universally acknowledged as genuine, Otto of Jena, who has edited Justin's works, finds more than 200 passages in which there are either quotations from our Gospels or references to them. From these quotations or

references every one of our Four Gospels receives support. For example: in the *Dialogue with Trypho* Justin writes, "Wherefore also our Christ said [when He was] on earth to those who were affirming that Elijah must come before Christ: 'Elijah shall come and restore all things; but I say unto you that Elijah has already come, and they knew him not, but have done to him whatsoever they chose.'" The quotation so far is almost a verbally exact quotation from Matthew; but the substance of it is found in Luke. But Justin adds, "And it is written, 'Then the disciples understood that He spake to them about John the Baptist.'" [1] This is an exact quotation from Matthew, and is found in *Matthew only*. Again, Justin says that our Lord changed the names of the two sons of Zebedee to Boanerges.[2] This fact is recorded by *Mark only*. Again, he quotes the words of our Lord on the cross, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." [3] These words are found in *Luke only*. Finally, he quotes our Lord as saying, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." [4] The

[1] *Dialogue with Trypho*, cap. 49. [2] *Ibid.* cap. 106.
[3] *Ibid.* cap. 105. [4] *First Apology*, cap. 61.

quotation is not verbally exact, but it is very difficult, I think, to resist the conviction that Justin had in his mind the two sayings of our Lord recorded by John, and recorded by *John only* : " Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." " Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

IV

This last passage suggests another objection to the argument resting on Justin's quotations. It is alleged that in a large number of instances the quotations from the *Memoirs* do not exactly correspond to the text of our Four Gospels, and that, therefore, it is probable that Justin quoted from Gospels which have now disappeared. It is assumed that our own Gospels, which are attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, preserve a large part of the contents of these more ancient narratives ; but that the lost Gospels contained an earlier and therefore more trustworthy account of our Lord's life and teaching.

The objection is untenable. Justin quotes forty-eight passages from the Pentateuch : eighteen are quoted exactly, nineteen with

slight variations, eleven with marked divergence. He quotes twenty-one passages from the Psalms : sixteen exactly, *including nine (or ten) whole Psalms*, two with slight variations, three with decided variations. He quotes fifty-three passages from Isaiah : twenty-five exactly, twelve with slight variations, sixteen with decided variations.[1] Are we to conclude that we have a later Pentateuch, a later Psalter, a later Isaiah than Justin had ; that Justin's Pentateuch, Justin's Psalter, Justin's Isaiah have been lost and have left no trace of their existence behind them ; and that although our Pentateuch, Psalter, and Isaiah contain a large part of the materials which were found in the more ancient books, the materials have been re-arranged by some later hand, supplemented by later traditions, modified and coloured under the influence of later forms of theological thought ? The inference is an obviously impossible one. The Jews are the trustworthy custodians of their sacred books.

The explanation of the inexactness of a large proportion of Justin's quotations from the Old Testament is very simple, and does not

[1] Sanday : *Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 111, 112.

require any hypothesis of a lost Pentateuch, a lost Psalter, a lost Isaiah. For Justin to have verified all the passages that he quoted would have been a troublesome and tedious business ; and therefore he left many of them unverified.

A modern writer, if he is not quite sure of the passage which he is quoting, can easily turn it up. When he does not remember chapter and verse, his eye can run over page after page without difficulty till he discovers the words which he is hunting for. If after a few minutes' search he is still at fault, he has his Concordance. Justin had no Concordance, and to find a passage in a clumsy, unhandy, ancient manuscript was a much more laborious matter than to find it in a printed book. And, therefore, he generally trusted his memory, but his memory often failed him. He gave the substance of the text, but missed the exact words ; sometimes he ran two sentences into one. The figures which I have given show that this explanation is the true one. Of the sixteen exact quotations from the Psalms, nine (or ten) are *whole* Psalms ; when he wanted to quote a whole Psalm, he naturally distrusted his memory, and he therefore turned to the Psalter and copied the exact text. For shorter quotations, if he was sure of the substance of

the text, it was not worth while to take so much trouble.

His quotations from the first three Gospels are, however, much less exact than even his quotations from the Old Testament. Of "direct quotations," Professor Sanday finds sixty-seven; ten are substantially exact; twenty-five present slight variations; thirty-two marked variations.[1] There is a simple and natural explanation of this greater inexactness. He knew the Gospels very much better than he knew the Old Testament, and he therefore verified his New Testament quotations less frequently. Verbal accuracy was not essential to his purpose. The books in which the quotations occur are not commentaries: two of them are defences of the Christian faith against heathenism; the third is a controversial discussion with a Jew. If he

[1] Sanday: *The Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 114–116. The following note deserves to be considered: "A somewhat similar classification has been made by De Wette, *Einleitung in das N.T.*, pp. 104–110, in which, however, the standard seems somewhat lower than that which I have assumed; several variations which I had classed as decided De Wette considers to be only slight. I hope I may consider this a proof that the classification above given has not been influenced by bias."

gave the substance of the passages which he quoted from the Gospels, it was enough.

V

The question whether these *Memoirs* of Church Apostles, these "Gospels" which Justin used, and which in his time were read every Sunday in the Christian assemblies, were the same as our Gospels can be tried in another way. What account did the *Memoirs* give of our Lord Jesus Christ, His history and His teaching? Listen to the following summary.[1]

> According to Justin, the Messiah was born, without sin, of a virgin *who* was descended from David,
> Matt. i. 2–6. Jesse, Phares, Judah, Jacob, Luke iii. 31–34.
> Isaac, and Abraham, if not (the reading here is doubtful) from Adam himself.
>
> To Mary it was announced by the angel Gabriel that, Luke i. 26.
> while yet a virgin, the power Luke i. 35.

[1] Justin's references and allusions to our Lord's history were collected by Credner and Hilgenfeld, and have been thrown by Professor Sanday into what he calls "a sort of running narrative." This narrative I have given in the text. See *Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 91–98.

of God, or of the Highest, should overshadow her, and she should conceive and Luke i. 31.
Matt. i. 21. bear a son whose name she should call Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins.

Joseph observing that
Matt. i. 18–25. Mary, his espoused, was with child, was warned in a dream not to put her away, because that which was in her womb was of the Holy Ghost. Thus the prophecy,
Matt. i. 23. Isaiah vii, 14 ("Behold the virgin," etc.) was fulfilled. The mother of John the Baptist was Elizabeth. Luke i. 57. The birthplace of the Messiah had been indicated by
Matt. ii. 5, 6. the prophecy of Micah (v. 2, "Bethlehem not the least among the princes of Judah"). There He was born, as the Romans might learn from the census taken by Cyrenius, the first *procurator* of *Judæa*. Luke ii. 1, 2. His life extended from Cyrenius to Pontius Pilate. So, in consequence of this, the first census in Judæa, Joseph went up from Nazareth, where he dwelt, to Bethlehem, *whence he was*, as a Luke ii. 4. member of the tribe of Judah. The parents of

Jesus could find no lodgings in Bethlehem, so it came to pass that He was born *in a cave near the village*, and laid in a manger. At his birth there came magi *from Arabia*, who knew by a star that had appeared in the *heaven* that a King had been born in Judæa. Having paid Him their homage, and offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, they were warned not to return to Herod, whom they had consulted on the way. He however, not willing that the child should escape, ordered a massacre of *all* the children in Bethlehem, fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah xxxi. 15 ("Rachel weeping for children," etc.). Joseph and his wife meanwhile, with the Babe, had fled to Egypt; for the Father resolved that He to whom He had given birth should not die before He had preached His word as a man. There they stayed until Archelaus succeeded Herod, and then returned.

Luke ii. 7. *Ibid.* Matt. ii. 1. Matt. ii. 2. Matt. ii. 11. Matt. ii. 12. Matt. ii. 1–7. Matt. ii. 16. Matt. ii. 17, 18. Matt. ii. 13–15. Matt. ii. 22.

By process of nature He grew to the age of thirty years or more, *not comely of aspect* (*as had been pro-*

Luke iii. 23.

phesied), practising the
Matt. vi. 3. trade of a carpenter, *making ploughs and yokes, emblems of righteousness.* He remained hidden till John, the herald of His coming, came forward, the spirit of Elias being in him; and as
Matt. xvii.12,13. he *sat* by the river Jordan,
Matt. iii. 2. cried to men to repent. As
Matt. iii. 4. he preached in his wild garb, Luke iii. 3.
he declared that he was not the Christ, but that One (John i. 19 ff.)
Matt. iii. 11, 12. stronger than he was coming Luke iii. 16, 17.
after him, whose shoes he was not worthy to bear, etc. The later history of John Justin also mentions, how,
Matt. xiv. 3. having been put in prison,
at a feast on Herod's birth- Luke iii. 20.
Matt. xiv. 6 ff. day, he was beheaded at the instance of his sister's daughter. This John was
Matt.xvii.11-13. Elias, who was to come before the Christ.

At the baptism of Jesus *a fire was kindled on the Jordan*, and, as He went up out of the water, the Holy
Matt. iii. 16. Ghost alighted upon Him, Luke iii. 21, 22.
and a voice was heard from heaven, *saying, in the words of David,* "Thou art My Son; *this day have I begotten Thee.*"

Matt. iv. 1-9. After His baptism He was tempted by the devil,

who ended by claiming homage from Him. To this Christ replied, "Get thee
Matt. iv. 11. behind Me, Satan," etc. So the devil departed from Luke iv. 13.
Him at that time, worsted and convicted.

Justin knew that the words of Jesus were short and concise, not like those of a sophist. That He wrought miracles *might be learnt from the Acts of Pon-*
Matt. ix. 29–31, *tius Pilate*, fulfilling Isaiah
32, 33, x. 1–8. xxxv. 4–6. Those who Luke xviii. 35-43.
Luke xi. 14 ff.
from their *birth* were blind, Luke v. 17–26.
Matt. iv. 23. dumb, lame, He healed;
Matt. ix. 18 ff. indeed, He healed all sickness and disease, and He raised the dead. *The Jews* Luke viii. 41 ff.
ascribed these miracles to Luke vii. 11–18.
magic.

Jesus too (like John, *whose mission ceased when*
Matt. iv. 17. *He appeared in public*) began His ministry by proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Many precepts of the Ser-
Matt. v. 20. mon on the Mount Justin has preserved, [as, for example, those referring to] the righteousness of the
Matt. v. 28. scribes and Pharisees, the
Matt. v. 29–32. adultery of the heart, the
Matt. v. 34-37, 39. offending eye, divorce, oaths,
Matt. v. 44. returning good for evil, lov-

Matt. v. 42. ing and praying for enemies, Luke vi. 30.
Matt. vi. 19, 20. giving to those that need,
Matt. vi. 25–27. placing the treasure in heaven, not caring for bodily Luke xii. 22–24.
Matt. v. 45. wants, but copying the
Matt. vi. 21, etc. mercy and goodness of God,
Matt. vii. 22, 23. not acting from worldly motives—above all, deeds, Luke xiii. 26, 27.
not words.

Justin quotes sayings
Matt. viii.11,12. from the narrative of the
Matt. ix. 13. centurion of Capernaum and Luke xiii. 28, 29.
of the feast in the house of Luke v. 32.
Matthew. He has the
Matt. x. 1 ff. choosing of the twelve
Mark iii. 17. apostles, with the name Luke vi. 13.
given to the sons of Zebedee, Boanerges, or "sons of
Matt. xi. 12–15. thunder," the commission Luke x. 19.
of the apostles, the discourse Luke xvi. 16.
after the departure of the
Matt. xvi. 4. messengers of John, the
Matt. xiii. 3 ff. sign of the prophet Jonas,
Matt. xvi.15–18. the parable of the sower,
Peter's confession, the an- Luke viii. 5 ff.
Matt. xvi. 21. nouncement of the Passion. Luke ix. 22.

From the account of the
Matt. xix. 16, 17. last journey and the closing scenes of our Lord's life,
Justin has the history of
Matt. xxi. 1 ff. the rich young man, the Luke xviii.18,19
entry into Jerusalem, the Luke xix. 29 ff.
Matt. xxii. 11. cleansing of the temple, the
wedding garment, the con- Luke xix. 46.
troversial discourses about Luke xx. 22–25
Matt. xxii. 21. the tribute money, the re- Luke xx. 35, 36.
Matt. xxii.37,38. surrection, and the greatest

Matt. xxiii. 2 ff. Matt. xxv.34,41. Matt. xxv.14-30. commandment, those directed against the Pharisees, and the eschatological discourse, the parable of the talents. Justin's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper agrees with that of Luke. After it Jesus sang a hymn, and taking with Him three of His disciples to the Mount of Olives, He was in an agony, His sweat falling in *drops* (not necessarily of blood) to the ground. His captors surrounded Him *like the "horned bulls"* of Psalm xxii. 11–14; there was none to help, for His followers *to a man* forsook Him.[1]

Luke xi. 42–52. Luke xxii. 19, 20. Matt. xxvi. 30. Matt. xxvi. 36, 37. Luke xxii. 42–44. Matt. xxvi. 56.

Matt. xxvi. 57ff. Matt. xxvii. 11ff. Matt. xxvii. 14. He was led both before the Scribes and Pharisees, and before Pilate. In the trial before Pilate He kept silence, as *Psalm* xxii. 15. Pilate sent Him bound to Herod.

Luke xxii. 66 ff Luke xxiii. 7.

Justin relates most of the incidents of the crucifixion in detail, for confirmation of which he refers to the *Acts of Pilate*. He marks especially the fulfil-

1 Professor Sanday italicises this statement, as though it was not contained in the Gospels; but when our Lord was arrested, Matthew says, "Then all the disciples left Him and fled" (cap. xxvi. 56). Is not this the same thing?

ment in various places of Psalm xxii.

He has the piercing with
Matt. xxvii. 35. nails, the casting of lots and Luke xxiv. 40.
Matt. xxvii. 39ff. dividing of the garments, Luke xxiii. 34.
the *sneers* of the crowd Luke xxiii. 35.
(somewhat expanded from
Matt. xxvii. 42. the Synoptics), and their
taunt, *He who raised the dead*, let Him save Himself;
Matt. xxvii. 46. also the cry of despair, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and the last words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend Luke xxiii. 46.
My spirit."

Matt. xxvii. 57–60. Matt. xxvi. 31–36. The burial took place in the evening, the disciples being all scattered in accordance with Zechariah iii. 7.
Matt. xxviii. 1ff. On the third day, the day of the sun, or the first (or Luke xxiv. 21.
eighth) day of the week, Luke xxiv. 1 ff.
Jesus rose from the dead. He then convinced His disciples that His sufferings had been prophetically foretold, and they repented of having deserted Him. Having given them His last commission, they saw Him ascend up into heaven. Thus Luke xxiv
believing, and having first waited to receive power from Him, they went forth into all the world and preached the word of God. To

Matt. xxviii. 19. this day Christians baptize in the name of the Father of all, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost.

Matt. xxviii. 12–15. The Jews spread a story that the disciples stole the body of Jesus from the grave, and so deceived men by asserting that He was not risen from the dead and ascended into heaven.

There is nothing in Justin (as in Luke xxiv. ; but cf. Acts i. 3) to show that the ascension did not take place *on the same day as* the resurrection.

It was no part of Justin's intention to give a regular narrative of our Lord's life ; the references and allusions to it occur incidentally in the course of his two *Apologies*, and of his *Dialogue* with the Jew Trypho ; and yet, when these references and allusions are drawn together, they constitute an account of our Lord's birth and the principal events connected with it ; of His baptism by John and of John's preaching, imprisonment, and death ; of our Lord's temptation, His miracles, His election of the apostles, His great discourses, His institution of the supper, His agony in Geth-

semane, His crucifixion and resurrection, such as any of ourselves might write with the first three Gospels in our memory. The story which Justin knew is the story which we know.

You will have noticed that he has a few statements concerning our Lord which are not contained in any of our Gospels.[1] Of these, the account of the fire which was kindled on the Jordan at our Lord's baptism, and the words said to have been heard from heaven at the baptism, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee," instead of "Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee am I well pleased," occur in some very ancient versions of Matthew and Luke, and represent early readings in those two Gospels. That our Lord worked as a carpenter and made "*ploughs and yokes*," may have been a tradition. So may the statement that the wise men who, according to Matthew, "came from the east," *came from Arabia*. The statement that Herod ordered a massacre of *all* the children in Bethlehem was probably nothing more than a slip of memory. In whatever way these variations from the story contained in our own Gospels may be

[1] These are italicised in the summary extracted from Professor Sanday.

accounted for, it remains certain that the story contained in Justin's Gospels was the same as that which is contained in ours.

In Professor Sanday's summary of Justin's references and allusions to our Lord's history, there is no mention of any fact or of any teaching that appears in John's Gospel only. But I have already given one passage from the *First Apology* which, in my judgment, must have been drawn from John's account of our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus; there are other passages in the *First Apology* and the *Second*, and also in the *Dialogue with Trypho*, which seem to have been suggested by John's Gospel, and one very striking passage which must have been suggested by John's First Epistle.[1] As the Epistle seems to have been a letter written to accompany the Gospel, a quotation from the Epistle is equal in value to a quotation from the Gospel.

[1] In the *Dialogue*, cap. 123, Justin has, "We . . . are *called* the true *children of God, and we are.*" In 1 John iii. 1, John has, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be *called children of God: and* such *we are.*" The "such" is inserted by our Revisers. The form of John's sentence, we are "called children of God: and we are," is very remarkable, and it is reproduced in Justin.

Further, Justin's doctrine concerning the Eternal Word is the doctrine which is expounded in the prologue to John's Gospel.

VI

In Justin's own writings therefore there is decisive evidence that the Gospels which he himself used, and which were read in the Christian assemblies about the middle of the second century, were the Gospels of our own New Testament. But this conclusion is supported by evidence drawn from other sources. Tatian was Justin's comrade and friend, and Tatian's *Diatessaron*, as we have seen, was a "welding together" of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Is it credible that Tatian, who shared with Justin the perils of martyrdom, dropped the Gospels, which were written, as Justin says, by the apostles and the followers of the apostles, and used for his *Diatessaron* another set of Gospels of which Justin knew nothing?

Further: it was in A.D. 150 that these Gospels of which Justin speaks, and from which he quotes so large a number of passages, were read every Sunday when the Christians met for worship; about thirty-five years later Irenæus constructed an elaborate argument

to prove that there must be four Gospels, and only four. By universal concession, the Gospels which Irenæus used were the same as our own; if they were not the same as Justin's, what had become of the earlier narratives—narratives written by apostles and the followers of apostles? how did it happen that these ancient and more authentic narratives disappeared? how did it happen that they were replaced by documents of later origin and of inferior authority? how did it happen that no tradition or trace of the abandonment of the earlier Gospels and the acceptance of the later, no protest against the change, can be found in the writings of the men who were living when the change was effected?

The difficulty of answering these questions is enormously increased by the fact that the old Gospels—Justin's Gospels—were not mere private documents, a few copies of which were in the possession of Christian scholars, but public documents, read every Sunday in the Church assemblies. They were written—so Justin believed, and so his contemporaries believed—by the apostles and their followers; how did it happen that the Churches consented to the withdrawal of these authoritative and sacred narratives of our Lord's life, and to the

introduction into the services of the Church of other narratives, written by other hands? Was there no doubt, no hesitation, about the authority of the new stories? Did no great and ancient Church, proud of the traditions which it had inherited from its apostolic founders, resist the innovation? But if there was any protest against the new Gospels, any discussion of their superior claims on the affection and reverence of the Church, I ask again how is it that not the faintest trace of the protest survived, and that within forty years of the time that Justin wrote his *First Apology*, the new Gospels had not only secured universal acceptance, as having been written by Matthew and John, Mark and Luke, but had drawn to themselves religious reverence, as narratives which were covered by the authority of God?

If historical evidence has any conclusive force, it is certain that Justin's Gospels were the Gospels of Tatian, the Gospels of Irenæus, the Gospels of Tertullian, the Gospels of Clement of Alexandria, the Gospels in which we ourselves have caught the accents of a Divine voice and have seen the light of a Divine glory.

NOTE TO LECTURE ON JUSTIN

In the *Spectator* for June 21, 1890, there is a review of an American edition of the works of the late Mr. Bagehot. The editor appears to have given a great deal of pains to the correction of Mr. Bagehot's misquotations. Judging from the *Spectator* article, one begins to suspect that Mr. Bagehot's exact quotations may be as rare as Justin's, and his "variations," and even his "decided variations," as numerous. But Mr. Bagehot lived in a literary age, and when the literary conscience had a code of ethics which imposed the duty of quoting accurately. The *Spectator* gives two examples.

DICKENS

"'It's always best to do what the mob do.' 'But suppose there are two mobs?' suggested Mr. Snodgrass. 'Shout with the largest,' replied Mr. Pickwick."

BAGEHOT'S QUOTATION

"'Always shout with the mob,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'But suppose there are two mobs?' said Mr. Snodgrass. 'Then shout with the loudest,' said Mr. Pickwick."

CARLYLE

"Their Amendment Act . . . was imperatively required to be put in practice. To create men filled with a theory, that refusal of out-door relief was the one thing needful: Nature had no readier way of getting out-door relief refused."

BAGEHOT'S QUOTATION

"It was then above all things necessary that out-door relief should cease. But how? What means did great Nature take for accomplishing that desirable end? She created a race of men who believed the cessation of out-door relief to be the one thing needful."

Did Mr. Bagehot use what the critics would call "the original Dickens," which has mysteriously disappeared, and "the original Carlyle," which, strange to say, has had a similar fate? Are we to infer that our *Pickwick* probably attributes to Sam Weller a score of witticisms which Mr. Bagehot's *Pickwick* did not contain; and that probably the "chops and tomato" letter, and the famous trial of Bardell *v.* Pickwick, is a later growth? Are we also to infer that it is risky to attribute any startling passages in our *Chartism* to the real sage of Chelsea?

LECTURE XI

MARCION

I

Justin Martyr, in his *First Apology*, written about A.D. 150, speaks of Marcion as "a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive and teaching his disciples to believe in some other God greater than the Creator." He had a large number of followers. Justin says: "He has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies." He travelled over many countries, and at the end of the second century his heresy was formidable and widely spread. At the end of the fourth century it still survived in Italy, Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Syria, Cyprus, and Persia.

Marcion lived a blameless, honourable, and austere life; and the Marcionites maintained the rigid morality of the founder of their sect. They practised a severe asceticism, abstaining

from wine, from meat, and from marriage. They were of the same mind as Tertullian as to the crime of concealing their faith in order to escape persecution, and many of them suffered martyrdom for the name of Christ.

Their fundamental doctrine has an interest for us even in these times. To Marcion there were two Gods. He found an irreconcilable contrast between the God revealed in the Old Testament and the God revealed in Christ. The God of the Old Testament was a just, but a relentless God. The law which He gave to men was equitable, but stern; it represents His own character and the principles on which He governed mankind: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." The law of the God whom Christ has revealed is more gracious and more noble: "Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also"; and His law is the expression of His own merciful character and government.

The material universe and the human race were created, according to Marcion, by the God who was worshipped by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and whose presence was revealed to their terrified descendants at Sinai by the storm-clouds, the lightnings, the thunders, the awful fire, the smoke which "ascended as

the smoke of a furnace," and the agitation of the granite mountain, which trembled because He was near. He was the God whose prophets menaced the Jewish people with terrible punishments for their crimes, and who, when His patience was exhausted, swept them into exile and laid their country in ruins. He was a just God, but not good and gracious.

The miseries which were being inflicted on men in this life for their sins, the worse miseries to which they were destined in the life to come, touched the mercy of the Supreme. They were suffering justly but He pitied them. For thousands of years He had left the world and mankind in the hands of their Creator. He had concerned Himself about neither. But at last His heart was moved, and He sent the Lord Jesus Christ to redeem the human race from the power of this just but merciless Deity. Our Lord, on this hypothesis, was not the Messiah of Jewish prophecy, but a Messiah of quite another kind; He came for a wholly different work. He was not sent by the Creator of the world to give great secular splendour to His elect nation, but by the Supreme God, to deliver the human race from the evils which their Creator was righteously inflicting on them. The original apostles had

therefore, according to Marcion, misapprehended the true nature of our Lord's mission. Never was a great teacher more flagrantly unsuccessful in making his mind clear to his disciples. The men who had lived with our Lord in the closest intimacy during His earthly ministry believed that He acknowledged the authority of their ancient Scriptures; that He had come to fulfil the law and the prophets; that He was revealing more fully the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob; that He was the Christ for whose coming the Jewish race had been waiting and longing through many centuries of glory and of shame. This was their belief while He was with them; and for this belief they perilled their lives after He had returned to the Father. But, according to Marcion, their belief was wholly false. He therefore rejected the authority of the original apostles and of their followers. For him neither their Epistles nor their Gospels had any worth. They had continued to worship the God of the Jews as the Supreme God; they supposed that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah; to the last they were Jews rather than Christians.

But the Jews—and even many Christian Jews—had hated Paul as the enemy of their

faith and their nation, and as a traitor to their sacred traditions, their inalienable prerogatives, and their immeasurable hopes. There was incontestable evidence that between Paul and Peter there had been grave differences of judgment as to the observance of certain Jewish customs. For Marcion, therefore, Paul was the true representative of the mind of Christ; Paul had discovered what the original apostles had missed—the irreconcilable antagonism between the old Faith and the new. His Canon of the New Testament was constructed on these principles. It consisted of two parts—"The Gospel" and "The Apostolicon." In the "Apostolicon" he placed ten of Paul's Epistles, rejecting the Epistles to Timothy and Titus;[1] his "Gospel" was the Gospel of Luke.

But even Paul's Epistles were hard to reconcile with the doctrine of Marcion concerning the God of the Old Testament, and he therefore mutilated them. He cut out, for example, the following passages from the Epistle to the Galatians: "Know therefore that they which be of faith, the same are the sons of Abraham" (cap. iii. 7); "That upon the Gentiles might

[1] The Epistle to the Hebrews he, of course, rejected.

come the blessing of Abraham in Christ Jesus" (cap. iii. 14); "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no more of promise: but God hath granted it to Abraham by promise" (cap. iii. 16–18). But no mutilations —had they been still more audacious than those on which Marcion ventured—could remove from Paul's Epistles the reverence with which the apostle of the Gentiles regarded the ancient revelation of God to the Jews; and the orthodox assailants of Marcion had no difficulty in showing that even the mutilated Epistles were destructive of the Marcionite heresy.

It was also necessary to mutilate the Gospel of Luke. According to Marcion, Christ was not born of a woman, with a body of flesh and blood like our own; for it was impossible that in Him there should be anything that was derived from what had been brought into existence by the Creator of the world and of

mankind. His Gospel therefore began with the beginning of our Lord's public ministry: "In the fifteenth year of Tiberius, God came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught on the Sabbath day." The early chapters of Luke, which contain the account of our Lord's birth, His genealogy, His baptism, and His temptation, were omitted. There were also considerable omissions, which are not explicable, from later chapters in the Gospel.

The original text of Marcion's Gospel has been lost, but it has been reconstructed from Tertullian and Epiphanius, both of whom wrote against Marcionism. The assailants of Marcion contended that in the mutilated Gospel of Luke, as in the mutilated Epistles of Paul, enough was left to destroy the fundamental principles of Marcionism. They therefore had to quote and discuss Marcion's Gospel at great length; and from these quotations and discussions we can discover what it preserved of Luke's Gospel and what it rejected.

II

There are two questions to be determined before we can draw any conclusion from

Marcion's Gospel in support of the early origin of the Gospel of Luke: (1) Is it not possible that the two Gospels are two independent narratives, and may not the coincidences between them be explained by supposing that the two writers drew their story of our Lord's life and teaching from the same sources? Or, (2) If they are not independent narratives, is it not possible that Marcion's Gospel, instead of being a mutilated form of a more trustworthy narrative, is really the older document? In that case we should have to speak, not of the "omissions" of Marcion but of the "additions" of our present Luke.

First, then, were the two Gospels independent works? This is not possible.

(1) Marcion contains practically nothing that is not contained in Luke. "The additions are insignificant—some thirty words in all—and those, for the most part, supported by other authority." With the exception of these thirty words and some slight alterations of phrase Marcion's Gospel is simply "an abridgment of our St. Luke." [1]

[1] Professor Sanday: *The Gospels in the Second Century*, p. 214. The chapter on Marcion is perhaps the most interesting and valuable in his interesting and valuable book. I have used it very largely in this Lecture.

(2) The *order* of Luke's narrative is very different from the order of Matthew and Mark. Marcion's order follows Luke's.

"There is some disturbance and re-arrangement in the first chapter of Marcion's Gospel, though the substance is that of the third Synoptic; but from this point onwards the two move step by step together, but for the omissions and a single transposition (iv. 27 to xvii. 18)."

Out of fifty-three sections *peculiar* to St. Luke—from iv. 16 onwards—all but eight are found also in Marcion's Gospel. They are found, too, in precisely the same order. Curious and intricate as is the mosaic work of the third Gospel, all the intricacies of its pattern are reproduced in the Gospel of Marcion. Where Luke makes an insertion in the ground-stock of his narrative, there Marcion makes an insertion also; where Luke omits part of the narrative, Marcion does the same.

In the very heart of Luke's Gospel (ix. 51 to xviii. 14) discourses of Christ are inserted without regard to chronological order. "This peculiarity is faithfully reproduced in the Gospel of Marcion with the same disregard of chronology, the only change being the omission of about forty-one verses from a total of 380."

(3) There are names mentioned by Luke which do not appear in any of the other Gospels, —Joanna, Susanna, Cleopas and Zaccheus; "not only does each of the sections relating to these persons reappear in Marcion's Gospel, but it re-appears precisely at the same place."

(4) A careful examination of the first three Gospels shows that the three Evangelists do not always agree in their account of the particular occasions and circumstances of some of our Lord's sayings and actions. For example, the words of our Lord, "Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant,"—these words were spoken, according to Matthew and Mark at or near Jericho, when our Lord was on His way to Jerusalem to die; and they were spoken to rebuke and quiet the indignation with which the other apostles heard that James and John, or their mother on their behalf, had asked Christ to promise them the thrones on His right hand and His left in His kingdom. Luke gives the impression that they were spoken during the Last Supper. There are other similar dif-

ferences between the Evangelists, some of which those who have constructed "Harmonies of the Four Gospels" have found it difficult to adjust. Now it is remarkable that "where Luke has the other two Synoptics against him . . . Marcion has them against him too."

(5) Further, where Luke breaks off from Matthew and Mark, and leaves a gap in the story, Marcion leaves the same gap.

(6) "It has been noticed as characteristic of St. Luke, that where he has recorded a similar incident before, he omits what might seem to be a repetition of it. This characteristic is exactly reflected in Marcion, and that in regard to the very same incidents."

(7) "Then, wherever the patristic statements give us the opportunity of comparing Marcion's text with the Synoptic, and this they do very largely indeed, the two are found to coincide with no greater varieties than would be found between any two not directly related manuscripts of the same text."

The conclusion is irresistible. We must choose between the two alternatives. "Either Marcion's Gospel is an abridgment of our present St. Luke, or else our present St. Luke is an expansion by interpolation of Marcion's Gospel, or of a document co-extensive with it. No

third hypothesis is tenable." The two Gospels cannot be independent works.[1]

But, secondly, if the two Gospels are not independent of each other, may not Marcion's represent the original document? In that case the passages contained in our Luke are additions by a later hand. The evidence against this hypothesis is conclusive.

1. We know that Marcion mutilated Paul's Epistles; he would hardly hesitate to mutilate Luke's Gospel. The passages which he omitted in the Epistle to the Galatians are inconsistent with the theory that the Creator of the world, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Jewish psalmists and prophets, was the God who sent the Lord Jesus Christ to save mankind. The early chapters of Luke are equally inconsistent with this theory. The reasons which led him to mutilate the Epistle to the

[1] The quotations in the preceding paragraphs are from Professor Sanday's *The Gospels in the Second Century*, pp. 214–216. The sentences not marked as quotations contain either summaries of Professor Sanday's statements or explanatory matter introduced for the sake of readers who are not conversant with inquiries of this description. I have inserted the figures (1), (2), etc., to make the separate arguments more distinct.

Galatians would lead him to mutilate the Gospel.

2. There are indications of a very striking and decisive character that the passages which Marcion omits must have come from the same hand as the main body of the Gospel which he preserves. Luke has a style of his own. There are words that occur with great frequency in the third Gospel, which occur very rarely, or not at all, in the other books of the New Testament. The writer has his peculiar phrases, and he has his peculiar forms of construction. He has peculiarities in his use of adverbs, of prepositions, of pronouns, and in the combination of participles. These characteristics of his style are, for the most part, not so obvious as to strike ordinary readers: to detect them requires exact and laborious examination. But the style of the passages omitted by Marcion is identical with the style of the rest of the Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles. Luke's Gospel contains 309 verses which are absent from Marcion's: "In those verses there are found 111 distinct peculiarities of St. Luke's style, numbering in all 185 separate instances; there are also found 138 words peculiar to or specially characteristic of the third Evangelist with 224 instances. In other words, the verified pecu-

liarities of St. Luke's style and diction . . . are found in the portions of the Gospel omitted by Marcion in a proportion averaging considerably more than one to each verse." [1]

It would not be difficult for a man of literary skill to write passages which might pass for Dr. Johnson's ; it would be less easy to produce half a dozen paragraphs that could be mistaken for Gibbon's ; and still less easy to achieve an ease, transparency, and grace that might be mistaken for Mr. Froude's ; but for one author to write passages in imitation of another, which would stand the tests of concordance and grammar that have been applied to the " omitted " passages of Luke, would require—if possible at all—an artist of almost miraculous skill. There are no grounds for supposing that any Christian scholars in the middle of the second century subjected the style of Luke or of any other New Testament writer to the kind of scrutiny to which it has been subjected by the modern scholars of Germany and England ; and in the absence of the results which such a study yields, no imitator could have reproduced the peculiarities of Luke as they appear in those passages

[1] Professor Sanday : *The Gospels in the Second Century*, p. 229.

of our third Gospel which are absent from the Gospel of Marcion. Which then is the more probable alternative? Did some unknown writer in the second century work a literary miracle? Or did Marcion, who mutilated the Epistles of Paul, mutilate the Gospel of Luke? Hesitation is impossible. The Gospel of Luke is the original document; Marcion's is a mutilated abridgment.

III

In A.D. 150, according to Justin, Marcion had disciples in many countries. He must, therefore, have been teaching for many years. There is a general agreement that he was teaching his heresies in Rome about A.D. 139–142. Very early in his assault on the traditional faith of the Church he must have found it necessary to give his disciples a life of our Lord. His Gospel was probably published as early as A.D. 140, perhaps earlier; and as Marcion's Gospel was a mutilated abridgment of Luke's, the date of Luke's must have been earlier still.

But how much earlier? Professor Sanday has given a very striking answer to this question. Before the invention of printing, books had to be copied by hand. If the first copyist

of the original manuscript made a few mistakes, these mistakes would probably be reproduced with errors of their own by the writers who copied from him. The second man who copied the original manuscript would probably make another set of mistakes, and these also would be reproduced, with errors of their own, by the writers who copied from him. And the same thing would happen in the case of the third, the fourth, and every later copyist of the original. It is the business of those who study what is called the criticism of the New Testament texts to examine and compare the various readings of different ancient manuscripts. They also examine and compare the various readings found in the quotations from the New Testament which occur in ancient Christian writers, and from these they are able to discover the readings of the manuscripts which were used by these writers. As the result of this examination, they can ascertain, sometimes with practical certainty, sometimes with a high degree of probability, what manuscripts and what readings have a claim to be regarded as the more ancient. They can trace, so to speak, the pedigree and history of the various readings.

Now Professor Sanday, who is an authority in this curious province of learning, says: "If

Marcion's Gospel was an extract from a manuscript containing our present St. Luke, then not only is it certain that that Gospel was already in existence, but there is further evidence to show that it must have been in existence for some time." [1]

"In the year 140 A.D. Marcion possesses a Gospel which is already in an advanced stage of transcription—which has not only undergone those changes which in some regions the text underwent before it was translated into Latin, but has undergone other changes besides"; [2] that is, our Gospel of Luke must have passed through the hands of a succession of copyists before the text came into the condition in which Marcion used it. There is no direct evidence, says Professor Sanday, of the antiquity of the earth; but the geologist judges by the fossils—the relics of an extinct age—which he finds imbedded in the strata; so here, in the Gospel of Marcion, do we find relics which to the initiated eye carry with them their own story.[3] Marcion's Gospel was derived from Luke's; but the text of Luke which Marcion used—this is Professor Sanday's argument—must have had "a long previous history, and

[1] Pages 230, 231. [2] Page 238. [3] Page 236.

the manuscripts through which it was conveyed must have parted far from the parent stem." [1] Luke, therefore, must have been originally written a long time before A.D. 140.

Only scholars who have studied the criticism of ancient texts can form an independent judgment of the validity of this kind of evidence; and only geologists can form an independent judgment on the geological evidence for the antiquity of the earth. Most of us have to accept the fact of the earth's antiquity on the authority of geologists; and this particular argument for the antiquity of Luke's Gospel must rest, for most of us, on the authority of critical scholars. Professor Sanday's authority has great weight.

IV

Marcion's Gospel omits, as I have already said, the early chapters of Luke's Gospel. Perhaps to some of you it may appear that these chapters, with their story of angelic appearances and of prophecies uttered by Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, by Mary the mother of our Lord, and by the aged Simeon, give a

[1] Page 236.

mythical character to all that part of the narrative. You may feel half inclined to believe that though the rest of the Gospel may contain an early and authentic account of our Lord's history and teaching, these chapters must preserve the popular legends of a later generation, or must have been the deliberate invention of a later writer.

But examine their contents, and ask whether it is conceivable that they were invented by a Christian writer in the middle of the second century, or even in the earliest years of the second century; and ask, too, whether it is conceivable that popular Christian legends could have taken this form?

What strikes me in these chapters is that they show no trace of those great discoveries concerning the true glory of Christ which came to the Church after our Lord's return to the Father. In the words of the angel to Zacharias about the mission of the son that was to be born to him in his old age, and who was to go before the face of God and "make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him," there is nothing that passes beyond the old horizons of Jewish hope and prophecy. There are the same limitations in the words of the angel to Mary about the destiny of the child who was to be at once

her own Son and the Son of God. Nor in the song of Mary herself, in answer to the congratulations of Elizabeth, is there any premonition of the revelations of the glory of Christ which appear in the apostolic epistles. Zacharias "was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied": but his prophecy is the prophecy of a devout Jew, who saw, in the approaching advent of the Messiah, the fulfilment of the oath of God to Abraham, the restoration of the throne of David, the deliverance of the Jewish race from their enemies and from the hand of all that hated them. With these external and national deliverances there was to be a great ethical and religious reformation; but the whole of the prophecy, in its substance as well as in its form, is Jewish. Even Simeon's thanksgiving, in which Christ is described as "a light for revelation to the Gentiles" as well as "the glory" of God's people Israel, is also Jewish; it is the echo of some of the noblest of ancient Jewish prophecies; it shows no trace of the influence of the new spirit and the new modes of thought which were created by the Christian Gospel.

On the hypothesis that Marcion's Gospel represents the original document, these chapters were a later insertion. We are required to

suppose that some Christian writer in the second century composed these psalms and prophecies and angelic communications concerning the birth of Christ, and that he excluded from them every characteristic Christian element, everything that could distinguish them from the visions of the greatness of the Messiah which came to ancient Jewish prophets many centuries before. Is that conceivable? Would it have occurred to a Christian writer to practise that exclusion? Would it not have been natural for him to assume that, when an angel came to announce to Zacharias the birth of the forerunner of the Messiah, and to Mary the birth of the Messiah Himself, the angelic message would be penetrated with at least some rays of that splendour which did not break upon the common world till after our Lord's resurrection and ascension? Would it not have been natural for him to assume that Zacharias, Simeon, and Mary, the mother of our Lord, when they were filled with the Holy Ghost, must have had clearer visions of the true glory of Christ than had come to the ancient prophets of Judaism?

There would have been nothing to *invalidate* the authenticity of the narrative if the messages attributed to the angel, and in the prophecies

and psalms attributed to Zacharias, Simeon, and Mary, there had been these large anticipations of the new Christian conception of the Divine redemption and the Divine kingdom. The absence of these anticipations is a strong and to some minds will be a decisive, proof of the historic truth of the story. That it was necessary to exclude them would never have occurred to a Christian writer who was *imagining* what might have been said about the advent of Christ by an angel and by devout persons speaking under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. If he had tried to exclude them, he could hardly have done it. It is still less conceivable that these anticipations of maturer Christian knowledge could have been excluded from legends which had been created by the devout imagination of the commonalty of the Church.

The angelic messages, the psalms, the prophecies which are preserved in the two first chapters of Luke, give strong internal confirmation to the historical trustworthiness of this part of the narrative. The new revelation had not been made when Christ was born ; and neither the messages of the angel Gabriel nor the prophecies and psalms of devout persons under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost anticipate it. The

profound consistency between all that is contained in these two chapters and the actual stage of the development of Divine revelation at the time to which they refer, is beyond the reach of both accident and art. Its only explanation is the simplest one : the writer had learnt what was actually said by the persons whose words he professes to record.[1]

[1] The argument in the text for the genuineness of the first two chapters is sustained by the evidence from style. "In the principal omission—that of the first two chapters, containing 132 verses—there are 47 distinct peculiarities of style [*i.e.* peculiarities characteristic of the Gospel generally] with 105 instances ; and 82 characteristic words with 144 instances."—Sanday : *The Gospels in the Second Century*, p. 229.

LECTURE XII

PAPIAS

THIS evening I shall speak to you of a man who knew some, perhaps many, of the friends of the apostles, and who knew two of the original disciples of our Lord. That the apostles had friends whose names are not mentioned in the New Testament, friends whom they loved, and who loved them, has perhaps never occurred to some of us. And we may not find it easy to give a place in our imagination to the forgotten men and women with whom Peter, James and John, Andrew, Philip, Matthew, and the rest used to dine; in whose houses they were guests for days and weeks together; whose children they nursed and prayed for; whose misfortunes, illnesses, bereavements filled them with anxiety and sorrow, and in whose health and happiness they rejoiced; to whom they used to give accounts of the discourses of

our Lord and of His miracles; and of Mary His mother, and of Lazarus and Martha and Mary of Bethany; of the desolation and terror of the night in which He was betrayed; the awful darkness which fell on the world while He was hanging on the cross; the wonder and the doubt with which they heard in the early morning the first news of His resurrection, and their perfect blessedness when He appeared to them in the evening.

Not very many years ago there were people to whom it was wonderful that any one they knew should leave England, and, after a few months' absence, should return and tell them what he had seen in the Holy Land. It seemed very strange that a man living in the next house had walked in the streets of Jerusalem, had stood on the Mount of Olives, had seen Bethany and Bethlehem, had sat by Jacob's well, had been in a boat on the Lake of Gennesareth. It gave them a shock. For Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, Bethany, Bethlehem, Jacob's well, and the Lake of Gennesareth seemed to belong to another world than that which is visited by the light of the common day. They were visited in hours of devout thought. They were separated by a great mystery from the ordinary paths

of men. A glory transfigured them. It was not possible to think of them as we think of Geneva and Mont Blanc and the Lake of Lucerne. With some perhaps this feeling still lingers.

In the same way, the apostles seem to some of us to have no other place than in the New Testament. They lived with Christ during His earthly ministry. They knew people whose names are mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles and in the apostolic Epistles. But to the imagination they are separated from all the rest of mankind. It is forgotten that Paul must have had innumerable friends in Philippi, in Thessalonica, in the towns of Galatia, in Corinth, in Ephesus, in Rome—friends, who for twenty, thirty, or even forty years after his death must have had many things to say about him and his teaching. It is forgotten that the other apostles must also have had innumerable friends in different parts of the world, who transmitted to the next generation the substance of the story of Christ as they had heard the apostles themselves tell it, and the substance of apostolic doctrine. Papias, as I have said, knew men who were friends of the apostles; and he knew two men, who, though they were not apostles, had known Christ.

I

He was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, in the first half of the second century. Hierapolis —it is now in ruins—lay a few miles north of Laodicea and about one hundred miles east of Ephesus. A Christian Church was formed there in very early times, and it is mentioned by Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians (Col. iv. 13). It is probable that Papias was born between A.D. 60 and A.D. 70 ; his book, entitled *An Exposition of Oracles of the Lord*, was probably published about A.D. 135.

He had excellent opportunities of knowing men who had known the apostles. For the Apostle John lived in Asia Minor during most of the thirty years between the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and his death at the end of the century, and he must have been well known to a large number of the ministers and members of the Churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and the other great cities of the province. Ephesus was his usual home ; there he died, and there he was buried. In the time of Eusebius there was a tomb at Ephesus which bore his name, and which was regarded by the Christians with affection and veneration.

According to a tradition which seems to be trustworthy, the Apostle Andrew went with him into Asia Minor. You remember the earliest notice that we have of these two friends. Both John and Andrew were disciples of the Baptist, and they were with their master on the banks of the Jordan when he delivered his great testimony to Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God." The rest of the day they spent with our Lord, and they were His first disciples. Till they died, the memory of those great hours must have bound their hearts together in unperishable love.

The Apostle Philip, the friend of Andrew, settled in Hierapolis. Papias knew his two daughters, and recorded in his *Exposition* what Eusebius describes as a "wonderful narrative," which he had heard from them. Among the older members of the Church there must have been many who had known Philip himself intimately. Papias also met persons who had known several others of the apostles.

In his *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord* he made use of what the friends of the apostles had told him. In what seems to have been a letter addressed to a friend to whom the book was dedicated he says—

"I will not scruple also to give a place . . . along with my *interpretations*, to everything that I learnt carefully and remembered carefully in time past from the elders, guaranteeing their truth.[1] . . . On any occasion when any person came [in my way] who had been a follower of the elders, I would inquire about the discourses of the elders—*what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas or James, or by John or Matthew*, or any other of the *Lord's disciples*, and what Aristion and the Elder John, *the disciples of the Lord*, say. For I did not think that I could get so much profit from the contents of books as from the utterances of a living and abiding voice."

This is the account which Papias gives of the method he follows in his *Exposition*. The work itself, which appears to have been a considerable one, has been lost; nearly all the brief fragments of it which remain have been preserved by Eusebius and Irenæus, the most valuable of them by Eusebius. The latest trace of the existence of the book itself is in an inventory of the possessions of the cathedral at Nismes, dated A.D. 1218. As the *Lectures* of Ephraem and the *Diatessaron* of Tatian have been recently recovered, after having been lost for many centuries, the *Exposition* of Papias may also

[1] He means that he himself assured his friend of the accuracy of his reports of what the elders had told him.

be recovered, and it would be more valuable than either of them.

His reference to "Aristion and the Elder John" is rather obscure. The sentence is clumsily formed. It might convey the impression that, as he had learnt from the friends of the apostles what the apostles had said, he had also learned from the friends of Aristion and the Elder John what these two immediate disciples of our Lord had said. But this was not his meaning. He tells us that he had inquired and carefully considered what was *said* by the apostles; but when he comes to "Aristion and the Elder John," he changes the tense from the past to the present, and tells us that he had considered as carefully what these two men *say*. And Eusebius, who had the complete work of Papias in his hands, states distinctly, on Papias' own authority, that Papias himself knew Aristion and the Elder John, so that he had no need to rely on their friends for reports of what these two men had said about Christ.

It appears therefore that (1) Papias knew men who were friends of many of the original apostles; that (2) he knew two women who were daughters of the apostle Philip; that (3) he knew two men who were immediate

disciples of our Lord ; that (4) he had tried to learn from all these persons what they could tell him about Christ and about what had been said by the apostles about Christ ; and that (5) he had used what they had told him in his *Exposition*. He may not have been a man in whose critical judgment we could place any great confidence ; some of the traditions of our Lord's sayings which he records may have the faults of all similar traditions, and may be wholly untrustworthy ; but, as I think I shall be able to show, the evidence which can be drawn from him in support of the historical truth of the first three Gospels is of decisive weight.

II

He wrote an *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord*. What he meant by " Oracles of the Lord," or, as Dr. Lightfoot somtimes translates the phrase, " Dominical Oracles," appears from his own account of Mark's Gospel, a part of which I will now quote ; it will be necessary to quote the whole passage later on. He says that, according to " the elder,"

" Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remem-

bered, without however recording in order *what was either said or done by Christ.* For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him ; but afterwards, as I said, [attended] Peter, who adapted his instruction to the needs [of his hearers], but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's *Oracles* [or *Discourses*]."

There is a various reading in the Greek text of the last words of this passage. Some authorities give "Oracles," others give "Words," or "Discourses"; but the most recent critical editor has adopted "Oracles."[1] If this is the true reading, then Papias describes Mark's work as "an *account* of *the Lord's Oracles*"; and Papias' own book is an *exposition* of the Lord's "Oracles";[2] that is,

[1] Lightfoot: *Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion."* If the other reading is adopted, the argument in the text is not substantially weakened. The later statement—that Mark did not intend to give "a connected account of our Lord's Discourses," or "Teaching"—must cover the same ground as the earlier statement that he did not record "in order what was either said or done by Christ"; and an exposition of the "Oracles" must cover at least as much ground as an account of the "Discourses" or "Teaching."

[2] The phrase in Papias' account of Mark's Gospel is the same as that in his own title. Mark wrote an account of the *Dominical Oracles.* The other reading would, of course, give *Dominical Discourses* or *Teaching.*

an exposition of "what was said or done by Christ." The word Gospel had not yet come into use as the title of a narrative of our Lord's Life.

It was an *Exposition* of Oracles of the Lord, not an independent account of our Lord's life and ministry. Side by side with his own interpretations he quoted what the apostles themselves had said about our Lord and our Lord's teaching to persons whom he knew. The daughters of Philip may have told him many things which they had heard their father say about Christ—about His doctrines and about His precepts. So that if the book is ever recovered, we may find in it Philip's own explanation of the singular emphasis in the question addressed to him by our Lord after the Last Supper: "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? . . . How sayest *thou*, Show us the Father?" as though there was something exceptionally surprising in *Philip's* failure to recognise the Divine glory of his Master, and implying that a similar failure in Matthew or any of the others would have occasioned our Lord a less keen disappointment.

III

We return now to his account of Mark's Gospel, and I will give the whole passage as it stands in Eusebius.

"And the elder said this also: Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but afterwards, as I said, [attended] Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs [of his hearers], but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles [or discourses]. So then Mark made no mistake, while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them; for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement therein."[1]

That you may estimate the real importance of this testimony, I must remind you once more that Papias had known men who were the personal disciples of seven of the apostles—of John, of Matthew, of Andrew, of Peter, of Philip, of Thomas, of James. When he met them he used to ask them what the apostles had said about our Lord. He knew two daughters of the Apostle Philip; they be-

[1] Eusebius: *Ecclesiastical History*, book iii. cap. 39.

longed to the Church of which he was bishop, and they lived to a great age. He also knew two men who were immediate disciples of our Lord. With all these sources of information concerning our Lord's life and teaching, he declares that the Gospel of Mark is an authentic narrative. It is certain, therefore, that our second Gospel, in its substance, contains the very story that was told by the original apostles. These, and such as these, are the miracles which they declared that Christ had worked. These, and such as these, are the discourses which they said that Christ had delivered. Men whom Papias knew had heard the story of Christ from the apostles; Papias asked them about it, and Papias says that Mark has preserved the story which was told by Peter. If Peter and the other apostles had told a different story, is it possible that Papias could have believed that Mark recorded the story told by Peter? The two daughters of the Apostle Philip were living in the city where Papias lived, were members of the Church of which Papias was bishop; is it credible, if Mark's Gospel contained a different account of Christ from that which these women had heard from their father, that Papias would have said that "Mark made no mistake"? Aristion

and "the presbyter John" were surviving representatives of the first generation of Christians, disciples of our Lord Himself; is it credible that Papias, who knew them and who talked to them about their Master, would have accepted Mark's Gospel, if Mark's account of our Lord had not been in substance the same as theirs?

IV

Papias also tells us something about Matthew's Gospel. He says—

> "So then Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could." [1]

All that I have said in connexion with the testimony of Papias to the second Gospel might be repeated in connexion with his testimony to the first. It is not credible that Papias, who knew men that were friends and disciples of seven of the original apostles, who knew two women who were the daughters of one of them, who knew two of the original disciples of our

[1] Eusebius: *Ecclesiastical History*, book iii. cap. 39.

Lord, would have received the first Gospel as Matthew's if it had contained a story which, in its substance, was not the same as that which the apostles themselves had told.

V

But this is not an adequate statement of the real strength of the evidence contained in the passages which I have quoted from Papias. The historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels does not rest on the sagacity or the knowledge of individual men. It is not the judgment of Papias himself, whatever materials he may have had for forming it, that makes his testimony important. It is apparent that while friends, disciples, and children of the apostles were still living, and while some who had known Christ were still living, our first and second Gospels were received—and received with their consent—as containing true accounts of our Lord's ministry. The friends and disciples of apostles received them as containing in substance the story which they had heard the apostles tell; the children of an apostle received them as containing the story which they had heard their father tell; men

who had known Christ received them as containing in substance the story of Christ which they had known from the beginning—had known, in part, from what they themselves had heard and seen, in part from what had been told them by their friends, who had seen miracles which they did not see, and heard discourses which they did not hear. Whether, according to the information which Papias had from "the elder," Mark wrote the second Gospel or not is a matter of secondary importance. Whether Matthew originally wrote his Gospel in Hebrew is a matter of less importance still. The main point is this: the generation of Christians that heard the story of Christ from the apostles, some men who had known Christ Himself, received our first two Gospels as containing a true account of what our Lord had said and done. After the lapse of nearly eighteen hundred years I see them standing before me—men who had known John, and Matthew, and Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Thomas, and James,—the daughters of Philip—men who themselves had seen and heard our Lord; and as they point to these two Gospels, I hear them say, "These books contain the story of the mighty works and gracious teaching of Christ, 'even as they

delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.' " I require no stonger evidence. For myself I am satisfied. In the Gospel of Matthew and in the Gospel of Mark I am sure that I have, in substance, the story which was told by the original apostles.

VI

At this point we are met by, I will not say a plausible or ingenious, but a very audacious objection. We are asked to believe that the original Mark, the Mark of Papias, the Mark whose historical trustworthiness is so strongly authenticated, has vanished ; has vanished we know not how ; vanished we know not exactly when ; and that another Mark has taken its place ; that if we had the Mark of Papias, something might be said for the trustworthiness of its story ; but that our Mark is another and a later document.

Of course some reasons are given for this startling theory. We are assured that since Mark's Gospel omits many most interesting facts about Peter which are contained in the other Gospels, Mark could not have obtained

his materials from Peter's preaching. We are reminded that our Mark is just as orderly in its arrangement as Matthew and Luke, but that the Mark which Papias knew did not record " in order " what was said and done by our Lord. And, further, it is argued that Mark's record of what he remembered of Peter's preaching must have been a more fragmentary narrative than that which is given in our second Gospel.

I do not very much care to reply to these objections in detail. I shall discuss presently the conclusion which is drawn from them. But it does not seem to me very surprising that a Gospel composed from materials supplied by Peter's preaching should place less emphasis than the other Gospels on the eminent position of Peter in the apostolic company, and should omit some things greatly to Peter's honour, and some things greatly to his discredit, which the other Gospels contain. As for the " order " of the second Gospel, it is not quite the same as Luke's, it is very different from John's ; and Papias, after what he had learnt from the friends of the apostles or from the daughters of Philip, may have concluded that either Luke's arrangement or John's was better than Mark's. Or he may have come to the con-

clusion that none of the evangelists had followed the actual chronological order of the events of our Lord's history. That Papias gives the impression that the Mark which he had was more fragmentary than our Mark is an objection which hardly needs discussion.

It is also maintained that his account of Matthew's Gospel shows that he had quite a different Matthew from that which stands first of our four. Papias describes Matthew's work as a collection of "Oracles" (*logia*), and we are told that this means a collection of our Lord's *discourses*; but our Matthew is not simply a collection of discourses, it contains a large amount of narrative matter. This limitation of the meaning of the word "Oracles" cannot however be maintained. When Paul says that the Jews were entrusted with "the Oracles of God,"[1] he means that they had the keeping of the whole of the sacred Scriptures[1] not merely the keeping of those parts of them which record words that came direct from the Divine lips; in bulk these form a very inconsiderable part of the Old Testament. When the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of "the first principles of the Oracles of God,"[2]

[1] Rom iii. 2. [2] Heb. v. 12.

it is clear that he is thinking of the principles of the Divine order which are implicated in the whole story of the relations between God and the Jewish people as recorded in their sacred books. Clement of Rome, writing in the first century, uses the phrase as synonymous with "the sacred Scriptures": "ye know, beloved, and ye know well, the sacred Scriptures, and have studied *the Oracles of God*." [1] Philo of Alexandria quotes as an "Oracle" [2] the narrative in Genesis iv. 15, "The Lord God set a mark upon Cain, lest any one finding him should kill him." Papias himself, as we have seen, describes Mark's story of what was said and *done* by Christ as an "account of the Lord's Oracles."

The word "Oracles" covers both the discourses of our Lord and the account of His Birth, Temptation, Miracles, Death, and Resurrection.

The second objection to identifying our Matthew with the Matthew of Papias is more serious. He says that Matthew composed the Oracles "*in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could.*" It is maintained

[1] Clem. Rom. 53.
[2] Lightfoot: *Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* p. 174. See the whole passage.

that this implies, not only that Matthew wrote his book in Hebrew—the Aramaic dialect spoken by the Jews in Palestine—but that in the time of Papias there was no authorized translation of it into Greek for the use of those who did not speak Aramaic; that to Papias therefore a Greek Matthew was unknown. This however is not a legitimate inference from his statement. He does not say, "Matthew composed the Oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one *interprets* them as he *can*," but "Matthew composed the Oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one *interpreted* them as he *could*." This implies that in the time of Papias it was no longer necessary that each man should interpret the Aramaic original for himself and "as he could"; there was already a Matthew in Greek. The legitimate conclusions to be drawn from the statement of Papias are these: (1) While friends and disciples of the original apostles were still living, and while some men were still living who had known our Lord, there was a Greek narrative of our Lord's life and teaching which was accepted as Matthew's; (2) Papias had been told, on what he believed to be good authority, that this narrative was originally written in Hebrew.

It is this second inference which creates a

difficulty, and a difficulty which has not, I think, received any satisfactory solution. There is a general agreement among scholars that our Matthew is not a mere translation of a Hebrew original. Dr. Lightfoot refuses to concede that "it cannot have been translated from the Hebrew at all," and he thinks that it would be nearer the truth to say that "it is not a homogeneous Greek version of a homogeneous Hebrew original." [1] The question resolves itself into the larger one which is raised by the coincidences and differences between the first three Gospels, a question which cannot be discussed in these Lectures.

VII

Whatever may be the true solution of this last difficulty, the theory that our Matthew and our Mark are not the Matthew and Mark of Papias is untenable. It requires us to believe that a Gospel attributed to Mark, and

[1] Lightfoot: *Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* p. 170. The question is fully discussed in Bleek's *Introduction to the New Testament*, and other similar works. See also Salmon's *Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament*, Lect. x.

supposed to preserve the account of our Lord's Life and Ministry given by Peter, was in common use among the disciples of Peter and John and Andrew when the second century began; that this was lost, and a different Gospel, supposed to be Mark's, was being read in the Christian assemblies in the middle of the century. As if the disappearance of one Gospel were not enough, we are required to believe that another Gospel shared the same fate. At the beginning of the century the Church had a narrative of our Lord's Ministry, which the immediate disciples and personal friends of the original apostles believed was written by an apostle, by Matthew. In the middle of the century it had still a narrative of our Lord's Ministry which was believed to have been written by Matthew; but we are required to believe that the first Matthew, the true Matthew, had slipped out of the hands of the Church, and that another Matthew, a false Matthew—written we know not when, we know not by whom—had quietly taken its place. That within half a century two Gospels, each of them having such high authority, should have been lost, and that two others should have taken their place, and should have been regarded by all Christian Churches as the

very Gospels that had fallen into disuse and disappeared within the memory of large numbers of living men, is extravagantly improbable.

It has been suggested that the original Matthew and the original Mark were never actually displaced, but that they were *gradually* changed by the addition of new and spurious narratives and discourses, until at last they became practically new Gospels. This is an impossible theory. If copies of the Gospels had been in a very few hands between A.D. 100 and A.D. 150, and if a strong central authority had existed which could have controlled the additions made to the original text, the theory, though without a particle of evidence to support it, might not have been wholly incredible. But the Gospels were widely scattered; there was no central authority to control the interpolations and modifications of the text; and if this process of gradual change had gone on during fifty years, there would have been a countless variety in the contents of each one of the Gospels. One Matthew, one Mark would have contained twice as much as another; one would have contained large masses of material not found in another; for the growth would have gone on independently in different countries;

and these differences would have survived in ancient MSS. and versions. But, as a matter of fact, no such differences exist. Here and there an interpolation may be detected, as in the case of the account of the angel who descended and troubled the water in the Pool of Bethesda; but that an interpolation can be *detected* shows that the MSS. preserve the Gospels as they were originally written; the errors of copyists and editors may be corrected by a comparison of copies; and the occasional interpolations, which, perhaps, generally arose from the transfer into the text of an explanation or an illustrative fact which some copyist had written in the margin, are too few and too easily recognizable to be of any serious importance.

If our Gospels are not the same as the Gospels of Papias, the original Matthew and the original Mark have been lost—they have not *grown* into the Gospels which have inherited their name. Only the strongest evidence could make this theory of "growths" credible.

But all the evidence is on the other side. Papias wrote and published his *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord* about A.D. 135. At that date it may be assumed that the Matthew and the Mark which were received by the Church

when he made inquiries about them from Aristion and "the Elder John," from the disciples of Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Thomas, and James, and John, and Matthew, were the Matthew and Mark which were still received by the Church; for he was not writing about books which had been rejected or lost, but about books which in the year A.D. 135 were well known, and which were received as containing the authentic story of Christ. They must have been the same books that were known to the disciples and friends of the original apostles. But fifteen years later, when Justin wrote his *First Apology*, Gospels containing the same story as our Matthew and Mark were read every Sunday in the Christian assemblies. A few years later still, our Matthew and Mark had a place in Tatian's *Diatessaron*. How did it happen that, with one consent, and within so brief a period, the Churches all over the world parted with the true Matthew and the true Mark? How did it happen that, with one consent, they put the same two new Gospels in the place of the two old ones, and attributed to them the authority and the honour of the two which had been rejected? [1]

[1] That the so called Gospel of the Hebrews could

Finally, Eusebius gives these statements of Papias about Matthew's Gospel and Mark's Gospel in fulfilment of his promise to indicate in his *History* whatever had been said about the canonical books by earlier writers.[1] Eusebius had in his hands the whole of the *Exposition* from which the statements are extracted. If the Matthew and Mark of Papias had been different books from the canonical Matthew and Mark, Eusebius could not have failed to discover it. The Matthew and Mark of Papias were the Matthew and Mark of Eusebius ; and the Matthew and Mark of Eusebius—about this there is no dispute—are the Matthew and Mark of our own New Testament.

VIII

In the fragments of this ancient writer preserved by Eusebius there are no references to either the Third or the Fourth Gospel. It does not follow that the *Exposition* itself contained no quotations from these Gospels, or no comments upon them. You will remember that Eusebius did not propose to give mere *quota-*

not have been the original of the Greek Matthew which was known to the Church in the second century, is conclusively shown in the tenth Lecture of Dr. Salmon's *Introduction*.

[1] See *ante*, p. 142.

tions that he found in early writers, when these quotations were from books about whose authority there was no dispute; and the authority of none of the Four Gospels had ever been disputed. It was only when he found some interesting *statements* about the undisputed books that he proposed to give them a place in his history. What Papias had said about the relation of Mark's narrative to the preaching of Peter, and about the language in which Matthew's "Oracles" were originally written, seemed to Eusebius sufficiently interesting to be recorded. It is to be assumed that Papias had said nothing equally interesting about the Gospels of Luke and John.

But while, as a rule, Eusebius does not take any notice of mere *quotations* from books which were universally received, he sets the rule aside in the case of the First Epistle of John and the First Epistle of Peter, although these were among the undisputed books.[1] Accordingly he informs us that Papias "made use of testimonies from the First Epistle of John."[2] But if Papias used John's First Epistle, he must also have used John's Gospel; if he acknowledged the authority of the Epistle, he must

[1] See *ante*, pp. 142, 143.
[2] *Ecclesiastical History*, book iii., cap. xxxix.

also have acknowledged the authority of the Gospel. For the Epistle is a supplement to the Gospel; it develops the dogmatic and ethical contents of the Gospel; it illustrates and applies them; the two are inseparable; Epistle and Gospel are vitally and organically one.

IX

The argument from Papias for the historical trustworthiness of the story of Christ contained in our New Testament is not yet exhausted. As I said earlier in this Lecture, the narratives of our Lord's life and teaching were not in his time called "Gospels"; or if that title was ever given to them, it was not in common use. Matthew's narrative he calls the "Oracles"; Mark's, an "Account of the Lord's Oracles." But "Oracles" was the title given to sacred books. To Paul the ancient Scriptures of the Jewish people were the "Oracles of God." To Philo, the great Jewish scholar of Alexandria, the narrative parts of the Old Testament, as well as the words of Jehovah, were "Oracles." To Clement of Rome the Jewish Scriptures were also "Oracles of God." When Papias gives this great title to the narratives of Matthew and Mark, he attributes to them the same

dignity, the same authority, the same sacredness that was attributed to the books of the Old Testament. It is inconceivable that this was his private act. The title may have been given to the books by the personal friends and disciples of Andrew, and Peter, and James, and John, and Thomas, and Matthew; it was certainly given to them by those who had known the friends of these apostles. Already these two narratives were not mere common books; they were "sacred Scriptures." Papias wrote an exposition of them, an *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord*. That books which commanded this affection and reverence among the friends of men who had known the original apostles—books to which they attributed so great an authority, books which they regarded as sacred Scriptures—should have been suffered to disappear within a single generation, leaving no trace behind them, and that they should have been immediately replaced by other books inheriting their names and inheriting their sacredness; that the Christian Churches in every part of the world, in Rome, in Carthage, in Alexandria, in Jerusalem, in Asia Minor, in Southern Gaul, should have silently consented to part with the old Gospels and to receive the new; and

that they should all have believed that the new were the same as the old—this is impossible. Strip the theory of the infinite ingenuity, the learning, the brilliance of exposition by which its real nature and form have been concealed, and it ceases to be even arguable. The miracles recorded in the Four Gospels, these are credible; but the miracles which this hypothesis requires us to receive are incredible. For if it is true, then there was a suspension of some of the most ordinary and certain laws of human thought and conduct, a suspension extending over many years and operating in tens of thousands of men, belonging to different races and living in many lands. This is asking us to believe too much; the demands of the new criticism are more exorbitant than the demands of the old faith. For myself, I cannot submit to them; and I therefore continue to believe that our Matthew and our Mark are the same Matthew and the same Mark that were regarded as "Oracles of the Lord," sacred Scriptures, by those who had known the friends and disciples of the original apostles. They contain in substance the story of Christ that was told by Peter, and James, and Andrew, and Philip, and Thomas, and Matthew, and John.

LECTURE XIII

POLYCARP

I

POLYCARP, bishop of Smyrna, was martyred A.D. 155 or 156.[1] The proconsul urged him to deny his faith, and save his life: "Swear, and I will set thee at liberty; reproach the Christ." Polycarp answered, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any wrong; how then can I blaspheme my King, my Saviour?" I suppose that he meant to say that he had served Christ from his birth, and he was therefore born about A.D. 70. His parents were probably Christians; in any case, he must have

[1] The date which has been commonly received is A.D. 166 or 167. The earlier date is the result of recent investigations. See Lightfoot, *Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* pp. 103, 104.

received baptism and been instructed in the Christian Faith in early childhood.

Only fifteen years before he was born—perhaps only twelve years—Paul's long stay in Ephesus had come to an end. In all the cities of Asia Minor the remembrance of the great apostle of the Gentiles was still fresh; and the parents of Polycarp, and his early religious teachers, may have received the Christian Gospel from Paul himself.

About the time of his birth, if, as I suppose, he was born in A.D. 70, the Apostle John, the Apostle Philip, probably the Apostle Andrew, and, with them, other men who were the immediate disciples of our Lord, settled in Asia Minor.[1] John spent the greater part of the remaining years of his life at Ephesus. At John's death Polycarp was, at least, thirty years of age.

Polycarp had known John. You will remember the letter of Irenæus to Florinus, which I had occasion to quote in a former Lecture[2]—the letter in which he reminds his friend of the time when they listened to Polycarp together. "I can describe," says Irenæus, "the very place in which the blessed

[1] See *ante*, pp. 280–282. [2] See *ante*, p. 185.

Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how *he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever things he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching, Polycarp, as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures.*"

When Ignatius passed through Smyrna on his way to martyrdom in Rome—about A.D. 110 [1]—Polycarp was bishop of the Church in that city. He must then have been about forty years of age.

For the next forty years he was the most considerable of all the bishops of the Asiatic Churches; and towards the end of his life he travelled from Smyrna to Italy, to discuss with Anicetus, the bishop of Rome, the difference of practice between the Churches of Asia and the Churches of the West in relation to

[1] The exact date is uncertain. "The earlier date assigned is about A.D. 107, and the later about A.D. 116."—Lightfoot: *Essays*, etc., p. 59.

the celebration of Easter. During this visit, his testimony to the true Faith led many who had received the doctrines of Valentinus and Marcion to renounce their heresies. He was martyred, as I have said, in A.D. 155 or 156.

II

Irenæus speaks of the epistles which he wrote to neighbouring Churches to confirm their faith, and to some of his brethren. Of these one only remains.

Soon after Ignatius left Smyrna, Polycarp wrote a letter—he "and the presbyters with him"—to "the Church of God sojourning at Philippi"; and this is the letter which has been preserved. It was written at the request of the Philippian Christians, and consists very largely of exhortations to the practice of the Christian virtues, to steadfastness of hope and firmness of faith, to patience, to meekness, to brotherly love, to prayer, and to fasting. It contains warnings against covetousness, evil-speaking, false witness, and the spirit of revenge. There are exhortations addressed to presbyters, to deacons, to young men, young women, and widows; and they are

cautioned against receiving the teaching of men who would draw them from the truth. There are some sorrowful sentences about Valens, who had been a presbyter of the Church, but who had fallen into sin. At the close of the epistle he tells the Philippians that he is sending them the letters which Ignatius had written to himself, and to the Church of Smyrna, and to some other persons or Churches; and he asks them to let him know anything that they had heard about Ignatius and those that were with him. Polycarp either knew or assumed that Ignatius had suffered martyrdom, but had received no certain information either about his sufferings or how he bore them.

The letter shows that Polycarp was a devout, earnest, and humble-minded man, very solicitous about the practical righteousness of those who bore the Christian name, and for the peace of Christian Churches; but it gives no proof of any considerable intellectual power, and is singularly destitute of originality.

He had been educated as a Christian from his childhood; and his memory was charged with the writings of the apostles. The letter is a short one; it covers nine rather small

octavo pages in Hefele's edition of the apostolic Fathers, and there are footnotes to every page; and yet Dr. Lightfoot finds "decisive coincidences with, or references to, between thirty or forty passages in the New Testament."[1] Dr. Charteris, in his *Canonicity*, makes what he calls the "quotations" and the "echoes" from New Testament writers much more numerous. By "echoes" he means passages in which the thought or phrase has evidently been shaped by the remembrance of some New Testament sentence.

Polycarp had a great admiration for "the blessed and glorious Paul," and reminds the Philippians of the Epistle which Paul had written to them; and there are definite quotations or distinct "echoes" of Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and of the two Epistles to Timothy. There is a striking "coincidence" with a passage in the Acts of the Apostles. There is a trace —not very decisive—of the Epistle of Jude. Peter's First Epistle had impressed Polycarp very deeply; the frequency with which he quotes it is remarkable.

[1] Lightfoot: *Essays*, etc., p. 94.

He quotes our Lord as saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," in the precise form in which the words are given in Matthew xxvi. 41 and Mark xix. 38, and there are other passages which recall our first three Gospels. For example, he charges the Philippians to remember what the Lord said: "Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; *pity, that ye may be pitied;* with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you again; and that blessed are the poor, and those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." [1] This passage is made up from words of our Lord in Luke vi. 36–38, 20, and Matthew v. 10. There are other sayings of our Lord which are not given with any formula of quotation: "If we pray the Lord to forgive us, we also ought to forgive" (cap. vi.); "And if we suffer for His name, let us glorify Him" (cap. viii.); "Pray for them that persecute you and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross, that your fruit may be made manifest in all things, that ye may

[1] Cap. ii. It has been pointed out that the words italicised occur in the First Epistle of Clement of Rome (cap. xiii.), but not in our Gospels.

be therein perfect" (cap. xii.).[1] These are "echoes" rather than "quotations."

It is contended that as the first passage is given as an express quotation of what our Lord said,—"remembering what the Lord said, teaching"—and that as (1) there is no passage in our Gospels in which these words occur in the order in which Polycarp gives them, or in the precise form in which he gives them; and as (2) the words, "pity, that ye may be pitied," do not occur in our Gospels,—Polycarp must have used some other collection of our Lord's sayings; and that therefore he did not recognize the authority of the Gospels in our canon.

But suppose that this passage contained a decisive proof that he used some collection of our Lord's sayings which has disappeared, or one of those narratives of what Christ had said and done and suffered which, according to Luke; "many" had drawn up, how does this affect the authority of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? We know that such "narratives" existed in the early days of the Christian Church; they disappeared, because they were displaced by more complete and authentic Gospels. When Polycarp was a child and his

[1] Compare Matt. vi. 14, *seq.*; v. 11, *seq.*; v. 44, 48.

Christian education began—he was ten years old in A.D. 80—he may have received his first instruction in the story of Christ from one of these earlier narratives; he may have learnt long passages from them by heart; and the words of our Lord, as he had learnt them in childhood, would occur to him more naturally than the words as they appeared in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, although he believed that Matthew, Mark, and Luke were more trustworthy. Those of us who have used the Revised Version of the New Testament ever since it was published, and who believe that it is much more accurate than the Authorized Version, which we used when we were children, find ourselves quoting the Authorized Version still when we are quoting from memory; and in all probability we shall continue to quote it to our dying day. We know that, though the later version is more accurate than the earlier, the substance of both is the same. And if Polycarp used some earlier narrative which has been lost, his quotations from it only confirm, as far as they go, the trustworthiness of our present Gospels. In the earlier narratives the teaching of our Lord is in substance the same as in the more authoritative narratives which displaced them.

I deny however that the quotation is a decisive proof, or a proof at all, that he used an earlier narrative. He has drawn together precepts of our Lord which enforce certain gracious Christian virtues, and he recalls certain promises which encourage those who are in trouble to bear their troubles with buoyant hopefulness. These precepts and these promises, he says, were spoken by Christ. Some of them he gives very much as they are found in one or other of our Gospels; others are given in substance, though the form is varied. He does precisely what Christian preachers are doing every Sunday. When we say that Christ has given us certain exhortations and promises, which we proceed to quote, we do not mean that He gave them in the order in which we quote them; and when we quote from memory, very many of us are certain to give them in a form different from that in which they are expressed in the Gospels. The remarkable formula with which Polycarp introduces the words of our Lord, all of which are taken from the Sermon on the Mount, "Remembering what the Lord said, *teaching*," recalls the words with which the Sermon on the Mount is introduced by Matthew: "When He had sat down, His disciples came

unto Him; and He opened His mouth, and *taught* them, saying," etc. He has blended into one sentence two separate Beatitudes; but his account, as tested by our Matthew and Luke, of the specific blessings which are promised to two specific classes of persons, is perfectly accurate. Now that Christ has come they that *mourn* are to be *comforted*; the *meek* are to *inherit* the *earth*; they that *hunger and thirst* after righteousness are to be *filled*; the *pure in heart* are to *see God*; the *peacemakers* are to be called the *children of God*. But according to Luke our Lord declared that the *poor* are blessed, because theirs is the kingdom of God, and according to Matthew that the *poor in spirit* are blessed, because theirs is the *kingdom of heaven*. And according to Matthew He said, "Blessed are they that have *been persecuted for righteousness' sake*: for theirs is the *kingdom of heaven*,'. The kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven is promised by our Lord to two descriptions of persons; and it is to these same two descriptions of persons that, according to Polycarp, our Lord assures the same blessedness: "Blessed are the *poor*, and those who are *persecuted for righteousness' sake*: for theirs is the kingdom of God." And the words "Pity,

that ye may be pitied," are in substance identical with another beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful," or the pitiful: "for they shall obtain mercy," or pity. There is nothing in Polycarp's quotation that requires us to believe that he did not use our Gospels.

He has one sentence which is almost verbally identical with 1 John iv. 3: "For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is antichrist" (cap. vii.). And there is a phrase in which it is difficult not to recognize an echo of a phrase in the same chapter of the same Epistle. After quoting the words of Peter concerning our Lord, "who bore our sins in His own body on the tree," "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," he adds, "but endured all things for us, *that we might live in Him*." Surely there were vaguely present in Polycarp's mind the words of John (1 John iv. 9): "Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we *might live through Him*."

III

But the letter contains no quotation from the Fourth Gospel. Nor can I find in it any

proof that John's characteristic conception of our Lord, or John's characteristic theology, had exerted any power over Polycarp's religious thought and life.

The Christ of Polycarp is the Christ of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, not the Christ of the Fourth Gospel. The light and the fire which John brought down to the Church from the heights of God, of these the letter shows no knowledge; the light does not shine there; the fire does not burn. Polycarp seems to have found what was most closely akin to his own life in the First Epistle of Peter. He had been powerfully influenced by Paul; but though he knew the Epistle to the Colossians and the Ephesians, there is as little trace of the loftier speculation of Paul as of the mystical theology of John. The letter gives me the impression that his Christian thought and life had received their definite form before he came under John's influence. He was thirty years old when John died; his intimacy with John may not have begun till he was twenty, or even five-and-twenty. He had been educated in the Christian Faith from his childhood; his conception of the revelation of God in Christ and the type of his religious character were

already fixed. His intellect, as the letter shows, was of a very ordinary kind; after he reached manhood, he was not likely to reconstruct his religious thought under the influence of a new teacher. For John he had a deep affection and reverence; but his theology—at least, when he wrote his letter to the Philippians—was not Johannine. I shall have to recur to this fact later in the Lecture. It will have its place in the argument.

It may be said that Polycarp's letter is too brief for such large conclusions to be drawn from it. But the mystic thought of the Fourth Gospel and of John's First Epistle has a strange power. Wherever it finds its way it gives decisive proofs of its presence. It is like one of those strong perfumes which fill the house with their odour. It is masterful in its authority. It governs speculation; it adds a new quality to ethics; it determines the whole development of the spiritual life. If Polycarp had been Johannine we should have known it.

John stands apart. There are regions of thought in Paul which extend to the very confines of the kingdom of John; but John's kingdom remains his own. In the first three Gospels there are hints and suggestions of

the Christ who stands revealed in the Fourth, but they are only hints and suggestions ; there are gleams of that transcendent glory, but the gleams are transient and faint.

There are other contrasts on which critics have insisted between the whole contents of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the contents of the Gospel of John. It is maintained that the chronology of our Lord's ministry as related by John is irreconcilable with its chronology as related by Matthew, Mark, and Luke : that according to the Fourth Gospel the principal scene of our Lord's ministry was in Jerusalem and the south ; according to the first three, on the shores of the Lake of Galilee and in other districts of the north : that the first three evangelists represent our Lord's teaching as having all the qualities that charm great crowds of uncultivated people, as being familiar, homely in its illustrations, rapid in its transitions, picturesque, piquant ; that according to John He delivered long, elaborate, and mystical discourses : that in the first three Gospels our Lord's chief care is for good morals ; that in the Fourth He recurs again and again, in private and in public, to certain mysterious dogmas, as if these were of supreme importance, and is

always asserting His Personal claims: that the contrasts are so vivid and the differences so profound, that if John has given a true account of our Lord's teaching, Matthew, Mark, and Luke have missed the very substance of it; that there is one religion in the first three Gospels, and another in the Fourth. Finally, we are assured that, as the first three Gospels preserve, though with many legendary and mythical accretions, the true substance and method of our Lord's teaching, it is impossible that John or any other of our Lord's personal friends could have written the Fourth; and that it was written in the second century by some unknown author, a man of remarkable genius, whose Christian faith had been transformed by the mystical speculations of a daring philosophy, which had endeavoured to penetrate the secret of the eternal life of God.

The differences and the contrasts have been enormously exaggerated. The ethical perfection demanded in the Sermon on the Mount is impossible apart from that mysterious birth of the Spirit of which our Lord speaks in his conversation with Nicodemus, and that mysterious union with Himself which is illustrated in the parable of the vine and the branches. When He places His own personal authority

over against the authority of the law of Moses ;[1] when He calls to Himself all that labour and are heavy laden, and promises that He will give them rest ;[2] when He says that all things have been delivered to Him by the Father, and that no one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him ;[3] when He declares that He will come in His glory, and all the angels with Him to judge the nations[4]—He claims a greatness as august and awful as that which is attributed to Him in the opening verses of the Fourth Gospel, and as that which is assumed by Himself in the discourse which He delivered and the prayer which He offered during the night of His betrayal.

IV

But while the Christ of John is the Christ of the earlier evangelists, the differences and contrasts between His Gospel and theirs are obvious and striking. How do they affect the evidence for the historical trustworthiness of John's Gospel ?

[1] Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28.
[2] Matt. xi. 28.
[3] Matt. xi. 27.
[4] Matt. xxv. 31–46.

In the Lecture on Papias proof was given that our Matthew and our Mark were written and known and received as authentic while children and personal friends and immediate disciples of the original apostles were still living, while some men who had known Christ Himself were still living. These Gospels therefore contain in substance the story of our Lord's ministry which was familiar to the ministers and members of the Christian Churches in Ephesus and Smyrna and Colosse, and throughout Asia Minor. They contain the story which Polycarp had known from his childhood.

How then came Polycarp to accept the Fourth Gospel, if John did not write it, if it did not appear till some years after John's death? The differences between this new account of our Lord and the account which was given of Him in the Gospels with which he had been familiar for so long, were too striking to be missed. It contained a large amount of wholly new material—new miracles, new discourses. The new material was in many respects wholly unlike the old; the picturesque parables, the ethical precepts of the earlier Gospels, had disappeared and given place to long discourses, illustrating the deepest mysteries of the life of God and the life of

man. How then, I ask again, came he to accept it? There is only one answer to that question. He knew that John wrote it, and it contained the very representation of our Lord that he had been accustomed to hear from John himself.

If the new Gospel had not been John's, Polycarp would have found nothing in its characteristic qualities to attract him. We have seen that, as far as we can judge from his Epistle to the Philippians, he was untouched by those religious and philosophical speculations which are supposed to have transformed the original simplicity of the Christian tradition into the profound and mystical doctrine of the Fourth Gospel. His intellect was not speculative and adventurous, but practical. What he cared for was the traditional beliefs and plain Christian living. He was very little of a theologian. He was nothing of a mystic. He held fast by the simpler truths and duties of the Christian Faith, and delighted to recall the very words in which he had been taught them. With all his admiration for Paul, whose Epistles he knew so well, those transcendent regions of thought which are illustrated in the Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians seem

to have had no charm for him; in his own Epistle to the Philippians there is no indication that he had ever visited them. Imagine such a man as this discovering that a Gospel had appeared under the name of John, a Gospel wholly unlike the Gospels he knew, a Gospel containing a representation of our Lord wholly unlike that which had been given by John himself during the years that he had been John's disciple and friend: the Churches of Asia would have rung with his denunciations of the fraud.

The stronger the contrasts, the profounder the differences, between the new story and the old, the more vigorous and vehement would have been Polycarp's hostility. Every fresh article in the elaborate indictment of the Fourth Gospel, on the ground that it differs from the first three, adds to the strength of the proof that, since Polycarp accepted the Fourth Gospel, John must have written it.

But I may be told that the force of this argument depends upon the assumption that Polycarp was accustomed to read the story of Christ in our Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and that with whatever satisfaction I may regard the proofs which I have given in previous Lectures that these Gospels were in

common use, and were regarded as authoritative before the end of the first century, I have no right to take it for granted that the proofs will be equally satisfactory to everybody. It is possible—so it may be suggested—that our Matthew, Mark, and Luke are of later origin, and that to Polycarp they were wholly unknown.

I accept the suggestion for the moment; it adds fresh, though wholly unnecessary, support to an argument which seems to me already irresistible.

On this hypothesis the narratives of our Lord's life and teaching which were in the hands of Polycarp represented an earlier form of the Christian tradition than that which has been preserved in any of our Gospels. The devotion and imagination of the Church had not yet surrounded our Lord with the glory which appears in even our Matthew and our Mark, much less with the transcendent glory which transfigures Him in John. Those earlier narratives contained fewer and less impressive assertions of His personal greatness, attributed to Him fewer and less remarkable miracles and a simpler kind of teaching. On this hypothesis the Christ known to Polycarp, the Christ of whom he

had heard and read from his childhood, was a Christ in whose earthly history there was even less of the mysterious, the supernatural, the Divine than in the Christ of our first three Gospels.

This is the hypothesis. How then, I ask again, are we to account for Polycarp's acceptance of John's Gospel? If the contrasts and differences between our first three Gospels and the Fourth are great, the contrasts and differences between these earlier narratives and the Fourth Gospel are greater still. It may sometimes be difficult for ourselves to believe that the Christ of John is the Christ of Matthew, Mark, and Luke; but how was it possible for Polycarp to believe that the Christ of John was the Christ of these plainer and simpler narratives? Those who deny that the Fourth Gospel was written by John gain nothing by the hypothesis that Polycarp knew nothing of our first three Gospels. In that case his acceptance of John becomes still more impressive. That he did accept it is, in my judgment, absolutely certain.

V

For if John did not write the Fourth Gospel,

when was it written? Baur placed it as late as A.D. 170; but subsequent critics that deny the Johannine authorship have been unable to resist the force of the arguments with which that position has been assailed, and have placed it in A.D. 150 or 155, and even as early as A.D. 130.

Assume that it was written in A.D. 130. Irenæus could hardly have been a hearer of Polycarp earlier than A.D. 135; he may have heard him as late as A.D. 150, but the more probable date is A.D. 145. For reasons which have been stated earlier in this Lecture, it seems to me certain that if a Gospel had already appeared attributed to John, but containing a representation of our Lord and of His ministry different from that which John had been accustomed to give in his oral teaching, Polycarp would have denounced it vehemently. If it appeared as early as A.D. 130, Irenæus would have heard him denounce it. How could Polycarp have spoken of what he had heard from John about our Lord's miracles and teaching, without warning his hearers against the fictitious Gospel, claiming to be John's, which contained stories of miracles of which John had never spoken and discourses of our Lord wholly different in their

substance and their form from those which John had been accustomed to repeat?

But assume that it was written after Irenæus had ceased to be a hearer of Polycarp. This does not lessen the real force of the testimony of Irenæus, if the Gospel appeared at any time before Polycarp's martyrdom in A.D. 155 or 156. For Irenæus was not the last of Polycarp's hearers, and even after he had gone to Lyons, the relations between southern Gaul and Asia Minor were so intimate, that if Polycarp had declared that the new Gospel could not have been John's, Irenæus would have been sure to hear of it.

Assume—though this is becoming impossible—that the Fourth Gospel appeared after the death of Polycarp. Even this does not destroy the value of the testimony of Irenæus. That Irenæus believed that our Fourth Gospel was written by the Apostle John is certain; there is no hint or trace in his writings that he had ever doubted it. But he had heard Polycarp describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord; he had heard him relate their words. "And whatsoever things he had heard from them *about the Lord and about His miracles and about His teaching, Polycarp*, as

having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, *would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures.*" Polycarp's recollections of what he had heard from John and the rest were "*altogether in accordance with the Scriptures,*" and among these Scriptures Irenæus placed our Fourth Gospel. The vivid contrasts, the profound differences, between the Fourth Gospel and the first three give to this testimony immense weight. In Polycarp's recollections of John's teaching there must have been the same representation of our Lord as that which is contained in John's Gospel.

VI

John, Polycarp, Irenæus,—these three, it has been well said, are inseparable, so inseparable as to constitute an indestructible argument for the historical trustworthiness and the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel. But in these inquiries, carried on in the silence and loneliness of libraries, we too easily forget that when the ancient books were written which we are reading in order to find traces of the existence and authority of our Gospels, there were thousands and tens of thousands of

living men who could have told us very much more about what we want to know than we can learn by the most patient examination of these ancient writings. We unconsciously lapse into the habit of thinking that the historical trustworthiness of the story of Christ is built upon the scattered sentences which can be quoted from the writings of less than a score of ancient authors. The supports seem unequal to the weight which is placed upon them. But these scattered sentences which can be quoted are but hints and suggestions of the real argument, which is to be found, not in books, but in what must have been in the knowledge and faith of thousands and tens of thousands of living men and women.

Take, for example, the testimony of Irenæus about Polycarp, on which I have been saying so much in this Lecture. An extract, preserved by an ecclesiastical historian living in Cæsarea in the fourth century, from a letter written by a Christian bishop living in Lyons in the second century, seems a very slender thread on which to hang a conclusion of such immense importance as the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel. But Irenæus and Polycarp represent an immense number of Christian people who were living in those times in many parts of the world.

Polycarp was not the only man who heard about the miracles and the teaching of Christ from the Apostle John. John died about A.D. 100 : twenty, thirty, forty years later there were men still living, ministers of Churches, members of Churches, who could remember John and "the rest who had seen the Lord" just as distinctly as he could. Of this great company Polycarp is the representative. Their names are lost ; but in their day they were loyal to Christ, and contended earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. While they lived they shared with Polycarp the defence of that conception of Christ and of that account of His ministry which they had received from John and other friends of our Lord.

From this generation, consisting of the friends and immediate disciples of John and of the rest who had seen Christ, the story of what our Lord had done and taught was transmitted to a still greater number of devout men, some of whom —many of whom—endured torture and died cruel deaths rather than deny Christ. This generation is represented by Irenæus. In A.D. 185, the year in which he published his work, *Against Heresies*, the Fourth Gospel had already secured its great and authoritative

position ; and it was universally attributed to the Apostle John. But in that year there could hardly have been a considerable Church in Asia Minor in which there were not many men and women who might have used his own words, and said that they could " describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp "—or some other friend of John—" used to sit when he discoursed, and his manner of life, and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words. And whatsoever he had heard from them about the Lord, and about His miracles, and about His teaching," he, the friend and disciple of John, " as having received them from eye-witnesses of the life of the Word, would relate altogether in accordance with the Scriptures." It is impossible that these men would have received the Fourth Gospel as the Gospel of John, that they would have allowed the Church to receive it, if its account of Christ, His miracles, His teaching, His personal greatness and glory, had not been identical in substance with that which they themselves had heard from John's personal friends and immediate disciples.

LECTURE XIV

REVIEW OF THE ARGUMENT

IN bringing this course of Lectures to a close, I invite you to recall the ground over which we have travelled together, and to review the main positions which I have endeavoured to establish.

I

We began by inquiring why it is that the faith of the great majority of Christian people has not been shaken by the varied, incessant, and formidable assaults which in our time have been made upon the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures. It is commonly assumed that these ancient books are the very foundation of our faith in Christ, and that while their genuineness, their historical trustworthiness, and their inspiration are uncertain, faith is impossible. But during the last thirty or forty years it has come to be generally known that there are grave controversies concerning a large number of the books contained both in the Old Testament and

the New; that men of great learning are of opinion that even the Four Gospels were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but by unknown authors, who constructed their story from the untrustworthy traditions of a later generation, or who deliberately wrote fictitious narratives in the interest of conflicting "tendencies" in the Church, tendencies which were at last reconciled by mutual concessions and compromises towards the close of the second century. While these controversies are undetermined, and the authority of great scholars can be appealed to on both sides, how is it possible for ordinary Christian people who know anything of the seriousness of the subjects in debate and the severity of the conflict to continue to believe in Christ?

My first answer to the question was this: That whatever may have been the original grounds of their faith, their faith has been verified in their own personal experience. They trusted in Christ for the remission of sins, and they have been liberated from the sense of guilt; for deliverance from sin and the chains of evil habits have been broken or loosened, and the fires of evil passion have been quenched or subdued. They trusted in Christ for a firmer strength to resist temptation and to live right-

eously, and the strength has come. They have received from Him—they are sure of it—a new life, a life akin to the life of God. They have been drawn into a wonderful personal union with Christ Himself; "in Christ" they have found God, and have passed into that invisible and eternal order which is described as "the kingdom of God." Whatever uncertainties there may be about the historical worth of the four narratives which profess to tell the story of Christ's earthly ministry, their faith in Him is firm, because they know by their own experience that the Living Christ is the Lord and Saviour of men.

My second answer to the question was this: That there are Christian men who would say that the representation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Four Gospels appeals, and appeals immediately, to all those elements and powers of life that give answer to manifestations of the presence of God. They believe in Christ because they see God in Him. They do not ask for proofs that He wrought miracles; He Himself is the great Miracle; He transcends all the miracles attributed to Him by the evangelists. Discussions about the age in which the Gospels were written and about their authorship are of secondary interest; if they were written by

unknown men who belonged to the second, the third, or even the fourth generation of Christians, they preserve the substance and give a true account of His earthly history. The story they tell is no involuntary creation of passionate love; much less is it a deliberate invention. The life of the Eternal God is in it.

For these two reasons, critical and historical controversies do not destroy faith.

II

This discussion reminds me of a passage in a book by Mr. Francis Newman which had a great popularity forty years ago, though I suppose that it is now almost forgotten. The book assailed the dearest traditions of the orthodox and evangelical Churches, and yet there were devout Christians who found in it very much that seemed true and edifying. The passage of which I am reminded is rather long, but I will quote it, for I think that it will assist me to make clearer and more definite one or two of the principal positions which I have endeavoured to make good in these Lectures.

Mr. Newman says—

"If we form an *a priori* conception of the genuine champion of the Gospel from the New Testament, we shall say, that he is girt with the only sword of the

Spirit, the living word of God, which pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. In his hands it is as lightning from God, kindled from the spirit within him, and piercing through the unbeliever's soul, convincing his conscience of sin and striking him to the ground before God; until those who believe receive it, not as the word of man, but as, what it is in truth, the word of God. Its action is directly upon the conscience and upon the soul; and hence its wonderful efficacy; not upon the critical faculties, upon which the Spirit is powerless. Such at least was Paul's weapon for fighting the Lord's battles. But *when the modern battle commences*,[1] what do we see? A study table spread over with books in various languages; a learned man dealing with historical and literary questions; referring to Tacitus and Pliny; engaged in establishing that Josephus is a credible and not a credulous writer; inquiring whether the Greek of the Apocalypse and of the Fourth Gospel can have come from the same hand; searching through Justin Martyr and Irenæus, in order to find out whether the Gospels are a growth by accretion or modification, or were originally struck off as we now read them comparing Philo or Plotinus with John and Paul: in short, we find him engaged (with much or little success) in praiseworthy efforts at Local History, Criticism of Texts, History of Philosophy, Logic (or the Theory of Evidence) Physiology, Demonology, and other important but very difficult studies; all inappreciable to the unlearned, all remote from the sphere in which the Soul operates." [2]

[1] These italics are my own.—R. W. D.

[2] Francis William Newman: *The Soul: its Sorrows and its Aspirations* (fourth edition), p. 151.

When I first read that passage I was a very young man, and it made a deep impression on me. I could not shake it off. It perplexed me. In those days, though I had come to see that the Gospel of Christ is a direct appeal from God to what is deepest and most central in the life of man, my thought had not worked itself clear from the assumption that faith demands for its very existence adequate guarantees of the genuineness and authenticity of the Four Gospels. If I recall accurately my position at that time, I thought that all the other books, both of the Old Testament and the New, might be submerged under "sunless seas of doubt," and Christian faith remain, but that if the historical trustworthiness of the Gospels was lost, all was lost. And yet, if their authenticity was challenged, this criticism of texts, this history of philosophy, this discussion of the theory of evidence, this laborious search through Justin Martyr and Irenæus, this comparison of Philo and Plotinus with John and Paul, studies which, as Mr. Newman says, are "all inappreciable to the unlearned, all remote from the sphere in which the soul operates," were necessary. Mr. Newman seemed to me wholly in the right when he insisted that the power of the true preacher of the Christian Gospel is the power of

the truth and of the Spirit of God; and yet it seemed that the preacher could do nothing until scholars, working through long and laborious years, in many difficult and obscure provinces of learning, had demonstrated the authenticity and genuineness of four ancient books. It looked as if critics must settle their differences before preachers could bring home to men the reality and glory of the Christian redemption.

But what are the facts? Has the Christian preacher ever been compelled to be silent until the controversies of scholars were closed? Has he ever had to rely on the authority of scholars for the substance of the Gospel of Christ? Has he ever been uncertain about it, because there were learned questions on which scholars were not agreed? How was it with the original apostles? They had known Christ for themselves during His earthly ministry, and they had seen Him and listened to Him after He had risen from the dead. They knew that he was near them still, and that in His power and grace they had passed into the light of God. What they had to tell men about the great things which Christ had done and taught while He was visibly present in the world, and about the greater things which He was still doing, came from their own personal knowledge; it required no authentication from

the rabbis of the Jews or from the philosophers of the Greeks.

How was it with their immediate successors, the preachers of the second generation of Christians? They had been taught the Christian Gospel by the apostles and disciples of our Lord; but that Gospel had been verified in their own experience. They too knew Christ for themselves—the risen, the glorified Christ. They had received from Him the remission of sins and the gift of the Divine life. They knew the mystery and the blessedness of translation into the kingdom of God's dear Son. They spoke to Christ, and He answered them. Through Him they had found God. The greatest things about which they preached were things which had passed into their own experience. They were not mere guardians of a tradition, but spoke as *witnesses*, and told men what they themselves had seen and heard of Christ, the Lord and Saviour of men.

It is true that for their knowledge of what our Lord had done and taught in Jerusalem and Galilee they had to depend on those who had known Christ "after the flesh"; but there were some passages of the story which commanded their faith, even apart from their confidence in the accuracy of the recollection and the per-

sonal trustworthiness of the men by whom the story was told—passages which shone in their own light, words which had a Divine accent and a Divine power. It was the same when the story was fixed in the Gospels. The story rested on the authority of the original apostles of our Lord ; it was the story which the apostles had told ; and yet there were parts of it which, in a very true sense, were independent of apostolic testimony, and made an irresistible appeal to the faith of every man that knew for himself the glorified Christ, and had received the illumination of the Spirit of God.

The same conditions were repeated in the life and preaching of the third generation of Christians and the fourth. And in every new generation, from the time of the apostles to our own, the substance of the Christian Gospel has been verified afresh in the experience of penitents and saints. The true preachers of every new generation have been new and independent witnesses to the power, the grace, the glory of the Redeemer of men. They have spoken on the strength of their own knowledge. Even those of them who have the greatest reverence for tradition and authority would have been powerless, but for their direct vision of Christ, and their personal consciousness of the reality and great-

ness of the Christian redemption. Speaking broadly and generally, the actual experience of one generation creates, under God, the faith of the next. You and I received the Christian Gospel because men whom we knew and who spoke to us about Christ were vividly conscious that they had found redemption in Him; and we ourselves must have a vivid consciousness of redemption in Him if we are to transmit the Christian faith to those who will come after us. The Divine fire passes from hand to hand, from living men to living men. This is the general law. It has rarely to be rekindled from the torches of an earlier age.

The books which record the earthly life of our Lord—a treasure of infinite worth to the Church and the human race—have been held sacred, partly because the tradition has been transmitted from generation to generation that they contain the story of our Lord which was told by His original apostles, partly because very much of the story has in it a certain wonderful power which commands faith and exerts a gracious but regal authority over the central elements of the spiritual life.

But what is to happen when their historical trustworthiness is assailed by scholars, who use all the resources of ingenuity and learning to

destroy their authority? What is to happen when it is alleged that there is no decisive proof that all the Four were in existence before the later years of the second century; that the sayings of our Lord, as quoted by earlier Christian writers, vary so much from His sayings as given in our Gospels, that the quotations must have been derived from narratives which have wholly disappeared; that the Fourth Gospel differs so widely in style from the Apocalypse that both books cannot have been written by the same author, and differs so much from the first three, that if *they* are historically trustworthy, it must be a theological fiction?

Those who believe that the story of Christ which was received by the Church from the apostles has been held fast ever since have no choice. They are compelled by the assailants to discuss questions of literature and history.

It is an error to say that, "when the modern battle *commences*"—to use Mr. Newman's phrase—it is the man who ought to be girt with "the sword of the Spirit" that is sitting at a study table, spread over with books in various languages, Tacitus and Pliny, Plotinus and Philo, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and the rest. When the battle "*commences*," it is quite another man that is sitting there: not the preacher, but

the *critic*, who denies that the Lord Jesus Christ walked on the sea, cooled the fires of fever, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and raised the dead ; the *critic*, who denies that the Lord Jesus Christ, after dying for the sins of men, rose again the third day, and appeared to the disciples ; the *critic*, who, since he denies the truth of the story told in the Four Gospels, is endeavouring to show that we have no proof that this was the story which was told by the men who knew Christ, and that the books are by unknown authors belonging to a later generation. It is the hostile critic, not the Christian preacher, who is responsible for beginning, and continually renewing, the "modern battle," on fields which are so remote from the spiritual life of man.

When once they have been raised, the literary and historical questions at issue must be determined by literary and historical considerations. But I endeavoured to show, in the earlier Lectures of this course, that the controversy does not touch the faith of Christian men in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour of the human race, the Root of the Divine life in man, the Way to God. This faith does not ask for the protection of friendly scholarship ; and the assaults of hostile scholarship cannot reach it.

It needs neither Tacitus nor Pliny, neither Philo nor Plotinus, neither Justin Martyr nor Irenæus. It is in actual possession of the salvation which Christ has achieved for mankind.

But though faith in Christ is not imperilled by the literary and historical controversy, the controversy is a grave one; and in repelling the assaults of hostile criticism the Christian apologist discharges an honourable service. It is for him to show that the story of our Lord's earthly history, which has been the consolation, the support, the light, the joy of countless millions of men, has attracted their love, their wonder and their awe, has revealed to them the loftiest ideal of human goodness, and exalted their conception of the righteousness and grace and pity of God, is not the mere dream of a fervent enthusiasm, or the deliberate invention of a daring imagination, but the story which was told by the elect friends of Christ, whom He trusted to make His Gospel known to all nations, and that it was after this manner that the Son of the Eternal lived among men.

III

In the later Lectures I have laid before you some of the proofs on which Christian apologists rely for defence of this position. Those which I

have submitted have been nearly all of one kind. There are lines of argument of a different description. But some of these can hardly be made intelligible except to persons of considerable scholarship. Others—such, for example, as that which finds in the contents of the Fourth Gospel evidence that it was written by the Apostle John—can be best examined in books; that argument is full of interest; but I did not feel that I had the skill to deal effectively, before a popular audience, with all the details which must have a place in any adequate statement of it. Nor have I exhausted the particular argument which I have endeavoured to illustrate; other quotations from other Christian writers can be alleged to corroborate it. But, in my own judgment what I have said is sufficient, and more than sufficient, for its purpose.

I began by reminding you that, at the close of the second century, the story of the Lord Jesus Christ contained in our Four Gospels was received as authentic by Christian Churches throughout the world, that the books themselves were reverenced as sacred Scriptures, and that it was universally believed that they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

In A.D. 185, Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who had spent his early years in Asia Minor, and

who, about ten years before, had been sent on an important mission to Rome, wrote of the Four Gospels in a way which shows that they had been used by the Church so long, and held so high a place in the religious life of Christian people, that even the number of the Gospels was supposed to have mystical meanings.

That was about eighty-five years after the death of the Apostle John. Now it is not easy to believe that while John was living, and while other men were living who had known our Lord, spurious Gospels, containing untrustworthy accounts of what our Lord said and did, would have been received by the Church as having been written by John himself, by Matthew his brother apostle, by Mark and Luke, who were friends of Peter and Paul. If therefore it can be made clear that the Gospels—which are our Gospels—received and reverenced by Irenæus in A.D. 185 were not written after John's death, about A.D. 100, the main contention of these Lectures is established. The interval to be bridged is about eighty-five years; and the question to be determined is whether it is probable, whether it is possible, that at the end of that period Christian Churches all over the world would have received the Four Gospels as

containing the original, authentic, apostolic story of Christ, if these Gospels had not been generally accepted by Christian Churches when the period began.

Eighty-five years :—it seems a long time ; but it is exactly the time since my predecessor in the pastorate of this Church came to Birmingham. He began his ministry in Carrs Lane in the early autumn of A.D. 1805. This morning I am separated by as many years from the commencement of Mr. James's ministry in this congregation as separated Irenæus, when he wrote his book *Against Heresies*, from the death of the Apostle John. That may help you to appreciate the strength of the argument which rests on the reception of the Gospels in the time of Irenæus. During the six years that I spent at Spring Hill College, between the summer of 1847 and the summer of 1853, I was frequently the guest of Mr. James. It was his custom to invite two or three of the students to dinner on Saturday afternoon ; and he used to talk to us about the work for which we were being prepared, and about his own ministry, and about the preachers who were famous early in the century. In the summer of 1853 I became his assistant, in the summer of 1854 his colleague ; and I was his colleague till his death in the

autumn of 1859. During this second period of six years I was, of course, more intimately associated with him. We talked together about many things : about the history of this congregation ; about the changes which had passed upon his own theological opinions since his ministry began ; about other Congregational Churches in this city and in other parts of England ; about his early friends in the ministry ; about sermons and speeches which he had heard from men who had long been dead.

I have known, of course, a great deal about you and your fathers since 1853, when I began my ministry here, and I have known about all the principal events in the history of the Congregational Churches of England since then ; but from my association with Mr. James, my memory, both of yourselves and of English Congregationalism, may be said to extend over the whole eighty-five years between this morning and that Sunday in September, 1805, when he preached his first sermon as your minister ; whatever important events in your history or the history of English Congregationalism happened between the beginning of his ministry and the beginning of mine I came to know through him.

For example, it would be impossible for me to suppose that this chapel — *meeting-house* was

the older and better name for it—was in existence when he came to Birmingham ; for he used to talk to me about the old chapel which formerly stood on this site, about how the new chapel came to be built, and about things that happened in connexion with the opening. It would be equally impossible for me to commit the error of supposing that the Congregational Union of England and Wales is a venerable institution, founded by the Congregationalists of a century or a century and a half ago. I have what may be called a " second-hand recollection " of its formation early in the " thirties " of the present century, rather less than sixty years ago. He used to talk to me about its formation ; about the distrust with which it was regarded by some stanch Independents ; about the drawing up of the " Declaration of Faith and Order " by Dr. Redford, of Worcester, and himself, Dr. Redford doing the larger share of the work ; about its first secretary, Mr. Algernon Wells ; about the smallness of the numbers that were present at the early meetings ; and about the brevity of the " addresses " of the early chairmen.

And so a large number of men living in the time of Irenæus, A.D. 185, could themselves remember the principal events in the history of

their own Churches and of many other Churches during the preceding thirty-five years ;[1] and many of them may have known—some of them *must* have known—men whose recollections travelled back to the very beginning of the century. If the Gospels which were received by the Church at the beginning of the century —during the first ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years of it—Gospels which the Church believed were written by apostles,—if, I say, these Gospels had disappeared, and other Gospels had taken their place—taken their place in Carthage, Alexandria, Rome, Cæsarea, Smyrna, Ephesus, and Lyons—Irenæus and his contemporaries must have known it ; and it would have been impossible for the new gospels to have drawn to themselves, in the year A.D. 185, universal veneration as narratives of our Lord's ministry which had been received by the Church from the hands of apostles and their immediate disciples.

Take the Gospel of John. Irenæus had heard

[1] My own memory as minister of Carrs Lane congregation extends over thirty-seven years, as my ministry commenced in 1853 ; but I could claim a large knowledge, both of Carrs Lane congregation and of Congregationalism during the six years between 1847 and 1853.

Polycarp describe his intercourse with John and the rest who had seen the Lord ; this must have been long after John's death, perhaps as late as A.D. 145, or even A.D. 150, for Irenæus lived into the third century. Was the Fourth Gospel published before that time ? Then Polycarp must have spoken of it ; if John had not written it, Polycarp would have denied that it was genuine ; and Irenæus, who reverenced Polycarp, would never have received it. But if it was not published before that time, if it was unknown to John's friend and disciple forty or fifty years after John's death, then, again, it is incredible that Irenæus should have received it.

Polycarp's martyrdom was in the year A.D. 155 or A.D. 156. He had known John ; and for more than fifty years after the death of John he was one of the trustees and guardians of John's memory. During a great part of that time he was the most conspicuous personage among the Churches of Asia Minor. Nor did he stand alone. He lived to such an advanced age, that he probably survived all the men who had listened with him to John's teaching ; but for thirty or forty years after John's death there must have been a large number of other persons who would have associated themselves with him in rejecting a Gospel which falsely claimed

John's authority. While these persons lived, such a Gospel would have had no chance of reception; and for thirty years after their death, their personal friends, who had heard them speak of their intercourse with John, would have raised a great controversy if they had been asked to receive as John's a Gospel of which the men who had listened to John himself had never heard, and which contained a different account of our Lord from that which John had given. But within thirty years after the martyrdom of Polycarp our Fourth Gospel was universally regarded by the Church as having a place among the Christian Scriptures, and as the work of the Apostle John. The conclusion seems irresistible; John must have written it.

IV

From the Fourth Gospel let us pass to the other three. Five and thirty years before A.D. 185, we learn from Justin Martyr that when Christian Churches met for worship it was their regular custom to read certain narratives of our Lord's life, which he calls *Memoirs, Memoirs of the Apostles, Memoirs drawn up by the Apostles and those who followed them, Memoirs composed*

by them [the apostles], *which are called Gospels.* The description of these writings corresponds accurately to our Four Gospels, which are *memoirs*, recollections, not regular biographies, and which are attributed to Matthew and John, who were apostles, and to Mark and Luke, who were followers of the apostles. In Justin's works there are no less than 200 passages in which he either quotes words which are found in our Gospels, or refers to facts which our Gospels record. The quotations, indeed, are, for the most part, inexact; but they are such quotations as a man might make from memory. The story of our Lord which can be compiled from Justin's works is the same story as that which is given in the Gospels which are now universally received by the Church. There are a few —a very few—statements about our Lord in Justin which are not contained in any of our Gospels; as he must have known many men who had known the apostles, these statements may have come to him from tradition; the wonder is that they are not more numerous. Further, from Justin's quotations, every one of our Four Gospels receives support. It seems reasonable to infer that Justin's Gospels were the same as our own.

There is one consideration which makes this

inference certain. It is not conceivable that in A.D. 185 our Four Gospels would have been regarded with religious reverence, and would have been attributed to apostles, if they had appeared within the previous five and thirty years. Living men would have clearly remembered when they were first published, and when they were first introduced into the services of the Church. In A.D. 150—just five and thirty years before A.D. 185 — Justin's *Memoirs*, which he also calls *Gospels*, were being read to Christian men and women every week when they met for worship. By what miracle did they suddenly drop out of use, and drop out of use everywhere? By what miracle did new Gospels immediately succeed to their authority, and succeed to it everywhere? By what miracle did all the copies of the old Gospels suddenly perish, so that learned men like Irenæus had no suspicion that they had ever existed, and imagined that the new Gospels had been in existence from the beginning? Churches, like nations and individuals, are slow to change their customs. It takes time in our days to induce a single group of Churches, if they are not under a strong central ecclesiastical authority, to change their hymn-book; in the second cen-

tury there was no strong central ecclesiastical authority, and the great Churches stood on their traditions; and yet we are asked to suppose that between A.D. 150 and A.D. 185 they all changed their Gospels. And to increase the wonder, they believed the Gospels which they surrendered were written by apostles and followers of the apostles. It is incredible. The Gospels which were read in the Christian assemblies in Justin's time were the Gospels which a few years later were "welded together" by Justin's friend Tatian in his *Harmony*, and a few years later still were described by Irenæus in terms which show that during his memory they had always been regarded with reverence by the Church. Justin's Gospels were the Gospels of Irenæus; the Gospels of Irenæus are ours. The *Memoirs of the Apostles*, the *Gospels* which were read in the services of the Church in A.D. 150, were the same Gospels that are read in the services of the Church every Sunday in England.

At that time, in A.D. 150, Polycarp was still living. He and the surviving friends of the Apostle John would, as I have argued already, have prevented the Church, during the first half of the second century, from accepting any Gospel as John's which John had not written. But he and they would also have prevented the

Church, during the first half of the second century, from accepting any other Gospels as authentic which contained a story of Christ different from that which the original apostles had told. That during their lifetime Matthew, Mark, and Luke were received as genuine and authentic is a proof that the narrative contained in these three evangelists was, in substance, identical with that account of our Lord's life which they had heard from the beginning.

V

But we have a definite witness to Matthew and Mark in the person of Papias of Hierapolis, who had known friends of Andrew, and Peter, and Philip, and Thomas, and James, and John, and Matthew; who had known the daughters of Philip, for they were members of the Church of Hierapolis, of which he was bishop; and who had known two men who were immediate disciples of Christ. Papias had been anxious to learn about the discourses of the apostles from the men who had listened to them and had been their disciples. From the daughters of Philip he learned what their father had been accustomed to say about our Lord. From Aristion and "the Elder John" he learned what men who had known Christ Himself had to tell him

about our Lord's miracles and teaching. He used what he learned from them in his book, entitled an *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord*, or *Dominical Oracles*, which in modern language was an *Exposition of Christian Oracles* or *Christian Scriptures*; and, apparently, of the *Gospels*. On the authority of what had been told him by these persons, he says that Matthew's Gospel was originally written in Hebrew, and that Mark's Gospel consists of Mark's recollections of the discourses of Peter. In the brief passages of Papias which have come down to us, he says nothing about the third Gospel or the Fourth; he may have said nothing about them which was not universally known to the Church in the time of Eusebius, and therefore, whatever he said, Eusebius does not record it.

I think it extremely improbable that such persons as these,—the daughters of Philip, and the men who had known the apostles, and two men who were the immediate disciples of our Lord,—would have believed that the first Gospel was written by Matthew, if Matthew had not written it, or that the second Gospel was written by Mark, if Mark had not written it; and I think it equally improbable that Papias would have recorded the statements of any particular individuals among them concerning the author-

ship of these Gospels, unless their statements had been supported by the general consent of the rest. But though the testimony to the authorship of Matthew and Mark is in my judgment strong and sufficient, I am willing to admit that it is not absolutely decisive ; there are some kinds of facts on which tradition, unsustained by other evidence, is liable to error. It is possible that Matthew did not originally write his Gospel in Hebrew, though his friends, twenty or thirty years after his death, thought that he did. It is even possible that it was not Mark, but some other friend of Peter, that composed a Gospel from his recollections of Peter's discourses. But that such persons as those whom Papias consulted accepted Matthew's Gospel and Mark's Gospel as authentic is, for me, a decisive proof that these Gospels contain, in substance, the very story which had been told by the original apostles. They had heard the apostles ; they had the books ; and they believed that Matthew, one of the apostles, wrote the first Gospel, and that Mark, the friend of another, wrote the second.

"Yes ; but can we be quite certain that the Matthew and Mark of Papias were our Matthew and Mark ? " We can. Papias published his *Exposition of Oracles of the Lord* about A.D. 135 ;

and it is from this book—probably from an introductory letter which served as its preface—that the passages of his which I have quoted are taken. He was writing about Gospels which were at that time in common use, not about Gospels which had been superseded by other documents which gave a different account of our Lord. The Matthew and Mark of A.D. 135 were therefore the Matthew and Mark which had been received as trustworthy by men who had known several apostles, by the daughters of Philip, by two men who had known Christ. Fifteen years later, in A.D. 150, our Gospels were being read week after week when Christians met for worship. In that brief interval there was no time for the original Gospels to pass out of existence, and for new Gospels to take their place. The ground is solid and firm; our Gospels were the Gospels of Irenæus; the Gospels of Irenæus were the Gospels of Justin; Justin's Gospels were the Gospels of Papias. If Papias's Gospels contained a trustworthy story of our Lord, so do ours.

VI

In the later Lectures of this course I endeavoured to show that the Four Gospels are

historically trustworthy. But I end as I began. An assurance resting on historical and literary proofs that our Four Gospels contain the very account of our Lord's miracles and teaching that was given by the apostles and that they were written by apostles and their "followers," is not the foundation of our faith in Christ. The Gospels themselves are not necessary to our faith. There were tribes in the second century who, as Irenæus tells us, had believed in Christ, but did not possess the Christian Scriptures. And there are many men living in our own time who could say that, after their traditional confidence in the genuineness and authenticity of the Four Gospels had been broken up, and while their judgment as to the age in which the Gospels were written was still in suspense, their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was unshaken. For a time mists and clouds were resting heavily on His earthly ministry; they were not certain that they knew exactly what He had said and done during those brief years in which He, the Son of the Eternal, was revealing His grace and power under the limitations of this earthly life. But they were as certain as ever of the transcendent works which He had been doing during the eighteen hundred years since He returned to His glory, and which He was doing still. They

knew that, through age after age and in many lands, He had released men from the sense of guilt, had enabled them, in the power of His own life, to live righteously, and that through Him a great multitude had found God. These great things which Christ had done for others He had done for them. The books which told the story of the earthly Christ,—about these they were not sure ; about Christ Himself they were always sure ; and they trusted, loved, and served Him still.

The loss—the temporary loss—of certainty about our Lord's earthly history was a grave loss ; but it was not without its compensations. For a time the Christ of Jerusalem and Galilee was hidden by storm-clouds of controversy, and their hearts were sore that they could see and hear Him no longer. But they climbed the blessed heights which rise above all storms, and they learned to live in the immediate presence of the Christ who has passed into the eternal light of God, and yet is not beyond the reach of the most perplexed and most troubled of the sons of men. When they recovered the Christ of the Gospels, they saw Him transfigured and glorified.

For Christian faith it is enough to know the Living Christ ; a knowledge of Christ " after

the flesh"—in His place in the visible and earthly order—is not indispensable. But for the perfect strength and joy of the Christian life we must know both the Christ who lived and died in the Holy Land eighteen hundred years ago, and the Christ who, ever since His resurrection, has been saving and ruling men. To deepen your faith in the Living Christ, and to strengthen your confidence in the historical trustworthiness of the story of His earthly ministry contained in the Four Gospels, has been the object of this course of Lectures. They were begun when the frosts and the dark days of winter were with us; now that they are closing we have come to the heat and splendour of glorious summer. It may be—God grant it!—that this is a parable, and that while we have been pursuing these inquiries together, some of you have passed from wintry days of doubt into the clear light of a happy faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX

Note A (p. 142)

Eusebius finished his *History* shortly before the meeting of the Council of Nicæa. At that council, and during the fierce excitements of the Arian controversy which preceded it, the authority of the sacred books of the Church was regarded as final. Arius was condemned by an Egyptian synod on "the testimony of the Divine Scriptures." On the other hand, Arius himself, when sending a copy of his creed to the emperor, adds, "This is the faith which we have received from the holy Gospels, according to the Lord's words, as the catholic Church and the Scriptures teach, which we believe in all things." But the council, though it defined some of the greatest mysteries of the eternal life of God, did not attempt to declare what books should be regarded as forming the canon of the New Testament.

Seventy years later, however, the third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397) determined "that besides the canonical Scriptures nothing be read in the Church under the title of Divine Scriptures." A list of the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament is given which contains some books that we regard as apocryphal; the list of the canonical Scriptures of the New Testament is precisely the same as our own.

But the decrees of a provincial Council in Africa could not control the judgment of scholars and Churches in other countries. Throughout the West,

our present canon, largely perhaps through the influence of Jerome and Augustine, was accepted from the beginning of the fifth century. In Asia Minor, Gregory Nazianzenus, who died A.D. 389, did not acknowledge the Apocalypse. In Syria several of the disputed books were regarded with doubt as late as the sixth century, perhaps later.

The Apocalypse was placed among the disputed writings by Nicephorus of Constantinople, in the ninth century. It is curious that the Apocalypse, which was one of the seven books about whose apostolic authorship there was serious doubt in early centuries, is one of the five books about whose apostolic authorship the most recent school of destructive criticism is most certain. But gradually all the seven secured their place side by side with the books that were universally received as canonical.

The controversy was re-opened at the Reformation. Luther treated the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, and the Epistle of Jude, and the Apocalypse with great freedom. Calvin in his *Institutes* (book i., cap. vii.) declares it to be "a most pernicious error" that "the Scriptures have only so much weight as is conceded to them by the suffrages of the Church; as though the eternal and inviolable truth of God depended on the arbitrary will of men." He thinks that those who maintain that it depends on the determination of the Church what books are to be comprised in the canon show "great contempt of the Holy Spirit." He believes that faith in the Divine origin of Holy Scripture comes from "the secret testimony of the Spirit." For as "God alone is a sufficient witness of Himself in His own word, so also the word will never gain credit in the hearts of men till it be confirmed by the internal testimony of the Spirit." For Calvin,

the universal consent of the Church in the recognized canon did not close the controversy about the disputed books. He judged them, one by one, and judged them by their contents.[1] At the Council of Trent, "for the first time," says Professor Westcott, "the question of the contents of the Bible"—that is, the question what books are to be included in the Bible—"was made an absolute article of faith, and confirmed by an anathema."[2] The council set out a list of the books of the Old and New Testaments, including *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus*, 1 and 2 *Maccabees*, and passed this decree, "If however any one does not receive the entire books with all their parts as they are accustomed to be read in the catholic Church . . . as sacred and canonical, . . . let him be anathema."

For those who inherit the true Protestant tradition, the question, What books are to be included in the canon of either the Old Testament or the New? is not one which can be finally determined by Church authority.

Note B (p. 172)

An attempt is sometimes made to destroy the force of the kind of evidence alleged in these lectures for the trustworthiness of the story of the Four Gospels, by suggesting that similar evidence may be alleged

1 "With regard to the *Antilegomena* of the New Testament, Calvin expresses himself with hardly less boldness than Luther, though practically he followed common usage. He passes over 2 and 3 John and the Apocalypse in his commentary without notice."—Westcott, *History of the Canon*, p. 488.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 477.

on behalf of the canonicity and inspiration of the curious book called *The Shepherd*, and bearing the name of Hermas. At what date this book was written is uncertain; but it probably belongs to the middle of the second century. It is a collection of visions, parables, and precepts.

The following are the main points to be considered in comparing the "testimony" to *Hermas* with the "testimony" to our Gospels. (*a*) We learn from Eusebius that it had been read in churches, and was quoted by some ancient writers, but that it "had been spoken against by some," and therefore "could have no place among the acknowledged books." (*b*) The unknown writer of the *Muratorian Canon*, which belongs to the latter half of the second century (perhaps about A.D. 170), says that "Hermas composed *The Shepherd* very lately in our times, in the city of Rome, while the Bishop Pius, his brother, occupied the chair of the Roman Church. And therefore it should be read, but it can never be publicly used in the church either among the prophets or the apostles." (*c*) Irenæus quotes it *once*, but without naming the author; and quotes it in a way which probably, but not certainly, implies that he thought it an inspired writing. (*d*) Clement of Alexandria quotes it several times as an inspired writing. (*e*) Origen quotes it several times as having the authority of Scripture; and he is the first writer that attributes it to Hermas, the friend of Paul. But this theory of the authorship is given as being nothing more than his own private opinion. "I think," he says, "that that Hermas is the writer of that book which is called *The Shepherd*, which writing seems to me very useful and, as I think, divinely inspired." But he also says that it is despised by some. (*f*) Tertullian strongly condemns it, and declares that every council of the

catholic or orthodox Church judged it to be apocryphal or spurious.

It appears from these passages that *some Churches* read *The Shepherd* for a time in their public services, but this did not necessarily imply the recognition of its inspiration. Some Churches might think that Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is sufficiently edifying to justify its being read occasionally in the course of public service, without attributing to it the authority of the books of the New Testament. *Some persons* thought it an inspired book. But Tertullian strongly denied its inspiration, and maintained that it was generally regarded as spurious. Origen advanced the theory of its inspiration, and attributed it to the friend of Paul as a private opinion of his own. Evidence of this kind is wholly different from that which is advanced in the lectures for the historical trustworthiness of the Four Gospels; the evidence is conflicting; it consists largely in the opinions of particular individuals; so far as the evidence is derived from its use in the public services of the Church, the use was partial.

Further. The testimony of both individuals and Churches in favour of the inspiration of a book of edification is wholly different from their testimony that the Four Gospels contain the story of Christ which had been always received in the Christian Church. The testimony to the inspiration of *Hermas* rested on the *judgment* of those who believed it to be inspired: the testimony to the Gospels, as containing the story of Christ which had been told by apostles, rested on a continuous and unbroken tradition. The one was a question of opinion; the other was a question of fact.

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